



PEPSI TAKES ON  
"BIG RED"  
Page 28

NOVEMBER 1976

THE MEDIA MAGAZINE

\$1.25

# MORE



## The People Who Bombed The Capitol Are Now In The Magazine Business

### Also:

Garry Wills On  
**WHO'S WHO**

John Leonard On  
**FILM CRITICS**

Nora Ephron On  
**ESQUIRE**

John Simon On  
**THE DEBATES**

Pete Hamill On  
**CARTOONS**

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# MIN

## Media Industry Newsletter

What are the ingredients that make this one newsletter interesting to executives at firms as diverse as: Time, Inc.; Dow Jones; Gannett; New York Times Co.; McGraw-Hill; ABC; CBS; NBC; Capital Cities; Metromedia; JWT; Y&R; BBD&O; O&M; Merrill Lynch; Oppenheimer; Citibank; Chase; Chilton; Technical; Procter & Gamble; Gallagher Report; Colgate; Revlon; Warner-Lambert; American; Liggett & Meyers; AT&T; Warner Communications; Exxon; Mobil; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; Random House; Macmillan; MCI; Columbia Pictures, and Dun & Bradstreet.

It may be because MIN is notoriously well informed on the following:

- \* **People**...who are the movers...the bench warmers...the power-hungry...the artful, the crafty...the clever...the perceptive...how much do they earn?...what kind of bonus/incentive arrangements do they have? What are their next moves?
- \* **News**...searching for the economic motives...minifying the minarets of wisdom...unmasking the mincing pronouncements of corporate heads...mingling in the board rooms, boarding in the mingle-mangle of bars and newsrooms...scouring the corridors of power...watching power scoured.
- \* **Features**...interpreting media events and offering perspectives on the future...reviewing financial and statistical reports of publicly-held publishers, broadcasters, ad agencies...estimating sales and earnings of privately-held companies.
- \* **Exclusive research reports**...in depth of various aspects of newspapers; TV; CATV; radio; book publishing; magazines...evaluations of readership studies...MIN's annual survey of "best salesman and sales staffs" in broadcasting, consumer and trade magazines, newspapers...surveys of ad agency media departments...annual survey of accounting/SEC changes for management.
- \* **Cautionary marketing tales**...the inside look at marketing failures...who made the decisions...who pulled the plug...the aftermath of the debacle...typical title: How a Ten Cent Phone Call Could Have Saved Warner-Lambert Ten Million Dollars.
- \* **Predictions**...MIN's "Media Godfathers," cloaked in anonymity, express themselves freely on the future of new TV shows, new magazines and other ventures.

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## A cloudy view of solar energy

Just about everyone concerned with energy these days — ourselves included — has high hopes for the eventual contribution solar energy will make. But some self-styled experts sound as if they've been out in the sun too long.

Up in Vermont, for example, a candidate for nomination to the House of Representatives spent a lot of his stump time running against Mobil. His theme: Mobil, through its interest in Mobil Tyco Solar Energy Corporation, is doing promising research toward the development of low-cost, energy-efficient photovoltaic cells. But because Mobil wants to wring out every cent of profit from its oil investments, runs his argument, he's afraid Mobil will drag its heels on the photovoltaic project.

The trouble with this particular candidate was that he plowed old, familiar ground by airing a charge that has long been refuted. Where was he back last April, when the U.S. Senate's Joint Economic Committee asked this question of Dr. A. I. Mlavsky, executive vice president of Mobil Tyco:

"Is there any truth to the allegation that major oil companies (like Shell and Mobil), who are funding solar energy R&D, may have an incentive to slow down the commercial development of solar energy in order to maintain profits from other competing energy sources?"

Here's how Dr. Mlavsky answered:

"... Mobil has provided essential support in the program to develop our photovoltaic technology. Without Mobil's backing, this promising technology might have been abandoned by now.

"My involvement with Mobil Oil Corporation dates back only 18 months when the joint venture, Mobil Tyco Solar Energy Corporation, was formed. My previous background was with Tyco Laboratories, Inc. Because my work during the 18 months has focused solely on managing the development of photovoltaics technology, it would be presumptuous of me to speak for Mobil.

"Nonetheless, as a citizen and a photovoltaics practitioner, I find it difficult to see how Mobil could have an incentive to slow the development of solar energy, for two pragmatic reasons:

"The first reason is timing. It will take 20 or perhaps 30 years before photovoltaics or any other solar technology can have a major impact on total energy supply. This will be at about the time when oil itself will become a scarce material.

"Moreover, electrical energy from photovoltaics cannot replace several critical uses of oil — namely, gasoline and petrochemicals.

"So, both on the basis of the time frame of photovoltaics development, and on the specific uses of crude oil and natural gas, I see solar energy and the oil business as complementary, not competitive. From my experience with Mobil, I think that oil companies have a positive incentive to accelerate the development of solar energy."

The facts, of course, seem never to get in the way when a politician scents an issue. Still, we're confident that common sense will prevail — and that solar energy will eventually shine through even the clouds of political opportunism.

# Mobil

# THE MEDIA MAGAZINE More

NOVEMBER 1976

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 11



p. 6

p. 16

p. 32

p. 44

p. 48

p. 56

## 16 From The Capitol's Bombers

By Gabrielle Schang and Ron Rosenbaum

Now the urban guerrillas have a real problem: they're trying to make it in the magazine business. Among the editors of such publications as *Osawatomie* and *The Dragon* are some of the country's most-wanted fugitives. Among the readers of such publications are the Senate Internal Affairs Subcommittee and the F.B.I., which is going crazy trying to find the editors.

## 22 What's What At Who's Who

By Garry Wills

In the latest edition of *Who's Who*, the listees are asked to tell what made them great. Trouble is, only the obscure choose to tell us why they are famous.

## 24 I Got My Pool By Liking Prell Best

By Mark N. Grant

You know all those TV commercials in the supermarket and laundromat where Mrs. Average Consumer is asked to select the brand she likes best and, by golly, it always turns out to be the sponsor's product? Where do those "real" people come from?

## 28 Can Coke Meet The Pepsi Challenge?

By Sally Helgesen

Pepsi fired the first shots in the escalating cola war with a barrage of TV taste tests, and it looks like Coke's running scared.

## 32 Swamp Gas Among The Film Critics

By John Leonard

First came Pauline Kael's book *Reeling*, which prompted attacks from Robert Brustein and Richard Gilman. Gilman's attack prompted a counter-attack from Andrew Sarris, which was promptly rebutted by Gilman. With all the in-fighting going on these days among the film critics, when do they have time to go to the movies?

## 38 The Highest Roller In The Lit Biz

By Linda Wolfe

He's Scott Meredith, the ultimate wheeler-dealer and high-powered agent for Mailer, Agnew and maybe even Kissinger. An unpredictable and fierce negotiator, Meredith revolutionized agenting by perfecting the literary auction, recognizing the bonanza in foreign rights and forcing publishers to let agents in the front door.

## 48 The Biggest Name At Esquire

By Rust Hills

Vidal? Capote? Talese? Wrong. It's W.R. Simmons, whose name graces the most important study in magazine publishing. The last Simmons report, which indicated a precipitous decline in *Esquire's* readership, sent the magazine into an apparent death spiral. Can it recover?

## 52 The Goodwin Story

By Nora Ephron

This month's *Esquire* contains

an apology for a profile the magazine ran last year on Richard Goodwin. How Goodwin managed to obtain the apology—plus a \$12,500 out-of-court settlement—was the subject of *Esquire* senior editor Nora Ephron's media column for the November issue. However, *Esquire* Inc. president A.L. Blinder killed Ephron's column, which is printed here instead.

## Departments

### Letters

### 6 Hellbox

### 34 Literacy:

### The Great Debate

By John Simon

Whatever the political capabilities of Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford, their grammatical skills leave much to be desired.

### 44 Rosebud:

### Conrad's Cartoons

By Pete Hamill

Six days a week cartoonist Paul Conrad punctures lies, hokum and corruption with the boldest blacks and the most savage draftsmanship in any American daily paper.

### 56 Sports:

### Oh Say, Can You Sing?

By Randall Poe

Choosing the right singer to sing the national anthem at sporting events has become tricky business. For one thing, the fans like to sing along—loudly. For another, each singer has his own particular version of the tune.

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Photo by Calvin Fentress.

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## LETTERS

## CHECK

The statement attributed to me [referring to some CBS correspondents hired by Bill Small as "Small's Turkey Farm"] in your article in the October issue on Bill Small is fabricated in its entirety. I never made such a statement because I don't believe it.

The injustice is not to me but to the splendid young people who Bill Small has hired at CBS News.

It is strange that a magazine that purports to monitor the performance of the news media does not observe an important rule of good journalism: Check the source. No one contacted me on this matter.

—Walter Cronkite  
CBS News  
New York, N.Y.

*Philip Nobile replies:* Another rule of journalism requires standing by trusted sources. I stand by mine. The specificity of the quote, in my experience, is too great for invention. I would add that the attribution of inexperience is no insult and the state temporary.

## NOW, REALLY

In the September issue ["Salad Days on the Police Beat"] I am quoted as saying that corpses don't bother me a bit anymore. I am glad to learn this about myself. Now I don't have to put my head under the dashboard when going past a bad accident.

—Jimmy Breslin  
Forest Hills, N.Y.

## DEMERIT

Contrary to your statement [Times Watch—September 1976], the Des Moines newspapers do not formally evaluate the people in the newsroom. We do regularly keep tabs on who is doing well and who isn't—and we tell the people what we think—but we

have no forms, charts, slides, grades, points or report cards. Of course, if we did have such reports we'd issue demerits for relying on a secondary source, such as you did in your article.

—Michael Gartner  
Editor  
Des Moines Register  
and Tribune,  
Des Moines, Iowa

## POST-STAR

Aaron Latham writes that Jim Bellows of *The Washington Star* "wanted to hire the country's best cartoonist, so he called Oliphant in Chicago" ["Bradlee vs. Bellows"—September 1976]. There's that "it's-all-the-same-west-of-the-Hudson's" sloppiness again, yawn. Bellows hired Pat from *The Denver Post*.

—Barbara Haddad Ryan  
*The Denver Post*  
Denver, Colo.

In his recent article on the Bradlee-Bellows, *Post-Star* rivalries, Aaron Latham erroneously reported that Ben Bradlee threatened to fire a *Washington Post* staffer if she wrote a story on protected parking spaces in town. I happen to be the reporter referred to in Latham's account of Bradlee's alleged threat.

There are numerous inaccuracies in Latham's attempt to turn gossip about the *Post* into respectable reportage, but this particular statement of his is completely false. I would have told him this if he had bothered to check the story out with me, but he preferred instead to use the gossip as "unconfirmed" information. I can only assume that the rest of Latham's article is as unfactual and carelessly prepared.

—Karllyn Barker  
*The Washington Post*  
Washington, D.C.

## "EXPLOITATION"

I've been repeatedly admonished over the past few years, by friends and associates, *not* to respond with any overt signs of agitation, to articles written about Mason that are misleading, sensa-



tionalist or negative...

I've tried to...protect my child from the mindless prose of half-assed writers...But, it still hurts him. He's 10!!

I think that most of all I resent your misrepresenting your use of Mason to us... and your using the cover picture of him in conjunction with a headline created in the worst traditions of sensationalist, exploitive fan-magazine journalism. Mason had nothing to do with the ITT/kids articles ["Can This 48½-Inch Kid Make You Eat Cake For Breakfast?"—September 1976]... and your choice of information about him was poor, unfair, out-of-context and in the instance of the "kids have enthusiasm..." quote, a lie.

—Bill Reese  
New York, NY

## PURIST

You'd think that John Simon, in his purist role, and MORE, the grammatically permissive medium, would have recognized their incompatibility before Simon's piece on *The New York Times's* solecisms got into print. [Literacy—September 1976].

Simon says in his closer: "Even if that accusative [whom] serves no other purpose than to separate the

goats from the sheep, it has earned its place: let it be the sign by which believers in good usage recognize one another." How can an editor who put his imprimatur on that sentence have failed to notice the two perfect examples of the confusion of *whof* *whom* in the same issue? In the table of contents we have, "Who were they kidding?" And on page 52, "...three criteria for choosing whom would be asked..."

On page 50, there are two examples of plural pronouns with singular antecedents, a gaffe for which Simon chides both Judy Klemesrud and Clive Barnes: "For each, there is one moment... that stands out in their minds"; "And sure enough, that night he killed somebody. Shot them after some altercation."

Simon himself made a couple of slips. *Too* and *two* are not rhymes but homophones. But that's an extra-grammatical error. The stunner was Simon's use of *like* as a conjunction, and in a paraphrase from Hamlet, yet: "It followed like the night the day." Shakespeare was not above that use of *like*, but here the word was *as*.

—Ethel Strainchamps  
Springfield, Mo.

*John Simon replies:* Of course "too" and "two" are homophones, but because I was indulging in word-play on "rhyme" and "reason," they had to become rhymes—which in French prosody, for example, they would be anyway. I have no idea what possessed me to misparaphrase Polonius, however, unless it was my recalling that Shakespeare frequently fell for the catachrestic "like." As for the role of house purist at MORE, I gladly accept it; indeed, I hope that I was hired to improve the ambient grammar by osmosis. But osmosis is a slow process; when it is accomplished, the magazine will change its name to THE MOST. ■

# "One of these could educate every kid in Cincinnati."



"One brand-new B-1 bomber costs \$87 million.

Enough to wipe out the cost of public education in Cincinnati. With enough left over to fund the libraries in the District of Columbia.

A single B-1 could pay for fire protection in Los Angeles for one year.

Or finance the entire budget for the city of Atlanta.

Or pay all yearly expenses for streets, parks, and sanitation for Indianapolis, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Hartford, and Milwaukee. *Combined.*

But what about the military benefits of the B-1?

According to a host of experts, there aren't any.

A Brookings Institution study found: 'No significant military advantages [are] to be gained by deploying a new penetrating bomber such as the B-1.'

Yet, Congress seems determined to fund the most expensive weapon in U.S. history — a 244-plane system that could cost \$100 billion.

Our union wants to stop the B-1 funding.

We support a military strong enough to deter any aggressor foolish or venal enough to attack us.

But what good is it to be able to destroy Moscow ten times over if our own cities die in the meantime?"

— **Jerry Wurf**, President  
American Federation of State,  
County and Municipal Employees



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American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, 1625 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 Jerry Wurf, President William Lucy, Secretary-Treasurer.

# HELLBOX

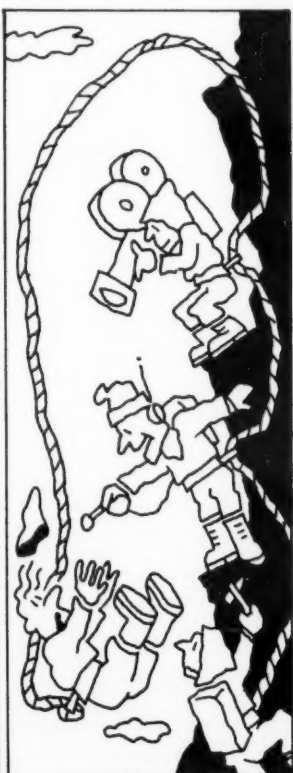
Random House scandal/Mayor unplugs newsmen/  
CBS bugs Everest climbers/Political coverage  
for sale/Sex life of Christ/Dan Rather fumes

## CBS SCALES MT. EVEREST

**First Network To Provide  
On-The-Slope Coverage**

There you are, scaling Mt. Everest, ducking avalanches and battling driving winds. Suddenly you slip—but you've hardly regained your footing when you hear, "Hey, the cameras didn't catch that. Could you do it again?"

Little requests like these had the tensions mounting last month as the American Bicentennial Everest Expedition ascended the mountain's 29,028-foot summit—with a CBS Sports film crew in tow. Intent on becoming the first American network to provide on-the-slope coverage, CBS had paid \$40,000 for TV rights to the expedition, and had hired a six-man professional film crew headed by Mike Hoover, a veteran of Clint Eastwood's mountaineering movie *The Eiger Sanction*. The film crew—plus Associated Press reporter Jurate Kazickas—joined the expedition from the outset—a three-week, 185-mile trek from Katmandu to the base camp set up at the 18,000-foot-high Khumbu Glacier. From there, they all embarked on the six-week, four-and-a-half-mile climb. The CBS team carried along the new portable minicameras, or minicams, in addition to the regular heavy



Rudy Hoglund

load of climbing gear.

The presence of the six-man CBS crew, however, put strains on the emotional as well as material requirements

of the 11-person expedition. Squabbles reportedly broke out all over the mountain over the need for additional oxygen, Sherpas (Nepalese porters and guides) and dinnertime yakburgers. Not to mention those requests to repeat daring ascents. "It is repugnant to me to be on a mountain with a number of people whose only job is to record the action," climber Arlene Blum told Kazickas.

Alas for the rugged mountaineer—but the media's participation has become a necessary evil to help defray the skyrocketing costs of mounting expeditions—at least \$1 million, according to a spokesman. The Everest team even went so far as to hire an advertising agency, Soulet & Carpenter of Los Angeles, which sold TV rights to CBS. (CBS showed three brief segments on "CBS Sports Spectacular" and plans an hour-long documentary in January.) S & C was also negotiating with Universal for overseas TV and worldwide film rights.

All this troubles Lord Hunt. John Hunt, leader of the 1953 expedition that put Sir Edmund Hillary on top of the mount, is resigned to having the media climb along, but questions whether "the mountaineer's feeling of obligation to TV companies who put up a lot of money" might someday create unsound judgment in order to get to the top.

Fortunately, this time out, no one fell. But only two climbers made it to the top, and

CBS was frustrated in its determination to be right there when the summit was reached.

—SHARON BROYDE

## TIMES, POST: 'NO'

**Refuse To Let Reporters  
Aid Bolles Investigation**



Burnham: Turned down

Eighteen reporters from 15 newspapers are converging in Phoenix over the next few months to investigate the murder of reporter Don Bolles. Among the participants in this highly unusual joint effort will not be *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

*Times* reporter David Burnham wrote a letter to managing editor A. M. Rosenthal outlining a proposal for his participation in the Bolles expedition, after being invited to join the investigation by Bob Greene of *Newsday*, the head of the 18-member team. Rosenthal replied that Greene's team approach (which has netted two Pulitzer Prizes for *Newsday*) would weaken "one of the great strengths of the American press, its diversity and competition." Rosenthal also said the *Times* could conduct a better investigation than anyone else if it wished to, and that "if a story is worth cover-

ing, we should do it ourselves." There are, however, no present plans to "do it ourselves." All this from the man who spent thousands of dollars to co-sponsor and cover an expedition to hunt for the Loch Ness monster.

At *The Washington Post*, metropolitan editor Len Downey says the editors were "wary of coming under control of an outside news organization" and concerned with the team's "credibility." Accordingly, said Downey, the *Post* was sending its own reporter to "work in a cooperative manner" in Phoenix—which seems to mean that said reporter will cover the activities of the 18-member investigatory team.

—ROBERT SNYDER

## PEOPLE PART II?

### N.Y. Times Considering New Picture Mag

*The New York Times* may be impossibly high-minded, but *The New York Times* Company just wants to see the bottom line. Accordingly, they're busily assembling a new picture-and-caption magazine that's intended to be a direct rival to *People*. The project—which presently involves designing a dummy issue and will probably include some marketing tests in 1977—is now underway at the offices of *Family Circle*, another Times Company holding. The new magazine will most likely be a weekly.

## BEN & SAL, BEN & KAY

### Familiar Characters Dot Steamy D.C. Novel

The story so far: Nick Gold, executive editor of the *Washington Chronicle*, has two women in his life: Jennie Lynn, his top society writer with whom he's having an af-

## DID HUNT KILL JFK?

### No, Says Howard, Suing for \$2.5 Million

E. Howard Hunt Jr. is pursuing a \$2.5 million libel suit against Third Press publishing house over the book

*Coup d'etat in America: The C.I.A. and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy*. Hunt claims that the book, written by A.J. Weberman and Michael Canfield, accuses him and Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis of planning and executing Kennedy's murder with the help of C.I.A. and Mafia conspirators. The authors based their case largely on the two

men's resemblance to the "tramp photos" of three hobos picked up on the day of the assassination by Dallas police. Acetate transparencies of Hunt and Sturgis are provided with the book, and readers are invited to place them over the tramp photos and draw their own conclusions.

—R S



**I am not a tramp:** Howard Hunt (right) claims he wasn't the hobo (left) picked up by Dallas police on November 22, 1963.

fair, and Myra Pell, the *Chronicle's* publisher whose husband committed suicide. But Gold also has Gunderstein—Harold Gunderstein—the ace investigative reporter who singlehandedly toppled a presidential administration for the *Chronicle*. Now Gunderstein is on to some damaging evidence about Senator Burton Henderson, Presidential candidate and favorite of Nick Gold. Seems Henderson was mixed up in the 1963 Diem assassination. Will Gold publish the story? Does anyone care?

Ben Bradlee—executive editor of Katherine Graham's *Washington Post*, roommate of his star society reporter Sally Quinn and longtime chum of JFK—sure as hell doesn't. Or so he says. Commenting on *The Henderson*

*Equation*, the not-so-subtle new roman à clef whose plot is outlined above, Bradlee hummed the whole thing. "No one's read it that I know of," he claimed. "There's no interest here."

Author Warren Adler, meanwhile, is itching for a lawsuit that will "make the book." Says the fearless storyteller: "I wrote it as I saw it... I expect to take my lumps, but *c'est la vie*."

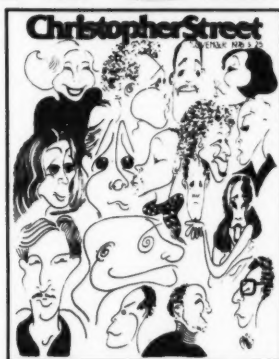
Calvin Fentress



**Bradlee and Graham:** Factors in The Henderson Equation?

# WARNING

## THIS GAY MAGAZINE IS DANGEROUS.



**Because  
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Imagine. A gay magazine that skipped the pornography and went on to great writing, ideas and humor. A magazine that told you what gay life is like in Russia, Hollywood and Lancaster, Pa. A magazine that let you in on why gays are one of the largest groups to refurbish brownstones, and why gay people have more to teach the Catholic Church than vice versa and why men are the ballerinas of the future.

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Copy**

compelling and readable that gay people are passing it on to their parents and straight friends. In other words, a totally new kind of gay magazine that threatens to change America's image of gay people. It's called Christopher Street and if you haven't seen it, you're missing something major that's happening in America.

Don't say we didn't warn you. Sample copy, \$2.00

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**12  
Issues  
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**HELLBOX****DID  
CHRIST  
DO IT?****No Way,  
Says England**

Jimmy Carter isn't the only fellow this year whose talk about Christ and sex landed him in trouble. Consider, if you will, the travail of Mr. Jens Jorgen Thorsen. Thorsen, a Dane, is currently the center of a not altogether minor maelstrom in Great Britain, proposed site for his next epic, *The Many Faces of Christ*. The reason? The film's subject is the sex life of Jesus, as depicted, rather explicitly, through liaisons with John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene and a contemporary Palestinian girl.

Thorsen was recommended for an \$80,000-state grant for the project by the Danish Film Institute in 1973. After a bit of reaction to this news—in Rome, for example, Molotov cocktails were thrown into the courtyard of the Danish ambassador—the Institute thought better of its charity and canceled the promised subsidy. The stated

reason: its legal experts had ruled the proposed film could not be shown legally in Denmark because it would violate the Danish copyright law and "the moral copyright of the four Evangelists in that it would distort the character of their work."

What was Thorsen to do? He turned to permissive Sweden, but by last summer, church leaders were in full cry against the proposed backing of the film by the Swedish Film Institute and the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation. France also said, "no thanks." So Thorsen looked to the Protestant stronghold of Great Britain for backing, actors and studio facilities.

The British did not greet the news with their customary reserve. The first reaction came from Equity, the actors' union, which was pressured to bar its members from working for Thorsen. The Archbishops of Westminster and Canterbury presented a united religious front, with the latter, Dr. Coggan, pledging to oppose the film "with every power at my disposal," including the blasphemy law, last invoked in 1922. Spearheading the attack on behalf of the silent (and mostly non-churchgoing) majority was Mary Whitehouse, founder of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Asso-

ciation. In response to a letter from Mrs. Whitehouse, Prime Minister James Callaghan suggested that Thorsen would be "a most unwelcome and undesirable visitor to this country," and even hinted that the Treaty of Rome might be invoked to deal with him, through a clause that empowers Common Market countries to refuse entry to "an undesirable alien likely to provoke a breach of the peace."

—MICHAEL MOYNIHAN

**RANDOM  
HOUSE  
SHAKE-UP****Publisher Says No To  
L'Amour In The Office**

In a move that stunned the publishing industry, Jim Silberman, the influential and respected vice president and editor in chief of Random House, suddenly quit his job last month. Why? According to industry sources, Silberman's relationship with the firm's publicity director, Selma Shapiro, led to his departure. Random House president Robert Bernstein was reportedly perturbed by this office affair and had asked Shapiro to leave. Silberman resigned soon afterwards. The stated reason: to start up a new venture called Hampshire Press within the corporate structure of Simon & Schuster.

Both Bernstein and Silberman deny rumors of a Bernstein ultimatum that either Silberman or Shapiro had to go for the good of the company. "I would never interfere in someone's private life," Bernstein insisted. "I'm very interested in such issues. I'm getting an award from the ACLU tonight." He said he wanted Silberman to remain at RH but that he had "business differences" with Shapiro. Asked if these differences had anything to do with Shapiro's attachment to

**Bernstein:** Center stage in Random House morality play.

Silberman, Bernstein replied, "I don't know how to answer that without going into business matters that I don't want to talk about."

One source suggested that Silberman rushed negotiations of a long-discussed deal with Simon & Schuster after Shapiro was let go. Would he have kept on at Random House without her? "That's an iffy question," Silberman answered. "I don't know." But he emphasized that Shapiro's separation from Random House was unconnected to his decision to quit.

One New York book editor, familiar with internal operations at Random House, indicated that Bernstein may have used the affair as an excuse to dismiss Shapiro. Other RH editors reportedly felt slighted by the attention the publicity director supposedly lavished on the authors of the editor in chief.

Random House's loss may be Hampshire Press's gain if Silberman's prestigious stable of best-selling writers—Weisel, Doctorow, Toffler, etc.—follow their editor. One Silberman author, David Halberstam, is currently under contract to Random House for a book on the news media. When Shapiro "resigned," Halberstam sent a seven-page letter of protest to Robert Bernstein.

—PHILIP NOBILE

*Did he kiss and tell Jens?*

## HELLBOX

# ELECTION DAY SALE

### Candidates Charged For Political Coverage

Traditions die hard in the South, and some weekly newspapers in Tennessee, Missouri, Kentucky and Louisiana still cling to a practice that dates back to the birth of journalism in that region. They will not report that a candidate is running for office unless the candidate pays for an article or advertisement.

In a survey of 22 papers, *Nashville Banner* staff writer John Brittingham found that 13 of the papers follow the practice. Under the United States Criminal Code, Title 18, Section 1734, if a paid news story is not marked as an advertisement, the editor is liable to be fined up to \$500. Also, in rules regulating campaign expenditures, Section 110.11 of the Federal Election Campaign Laws states that paid advertisements must be so marked, "clearly and conspicuously." According to Brittingham's research, these are frequent abuses.

One candidate received a form letter from the advertising manager of the weekly *Suburban News* in Tennessee, stating that an announcement of candidacy would not be run unless accompanied by the purchase of advertising at \$3.98 per column inch. A practical Ray Hamilton, publisher of *The Millington Shelby Star* in Tennessee, demands cash in advance for all political announcements. Otherwise, he reasons, "The losers wouldn't pay."

Albert Gore Jr., former editorial writer for *The Nashville Tennessean*, won Tennessee's 4th District Congressional Democratic primary. Gore says that he paid several weeklies from \$25 to

\$35 to announce his candidacy. These fees bought an announcement in a back-page column and an unedited hand-out run on the front page as a news story. He neglected to pay one paper and it didn't cover his campaign.

At the daily *Enterprise* in Bastrop, Louisiana, a \$35 fee will buy a candidate an "election card" or announcement on a back page. A news story where he or she "can boast about themselves, their kin folk, their church affiliation" is thrown in "free," though publisher Nathan Bolton claims that "we lose money on the dern deal." In a quadrennial special, however, Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford will not be required to pay *The Enterprise's* usual fee for Federal candidates. City council candidates pay a bargain rate of \$15. Says Bolton: "Cause the job pays less."

—VALERIE HENDY

## MAYOR UNPLUGS

### Boston's White Caught Disconnecting Reporter

What's a mayor to do? All those pesky reporters! Well, if you're Kevin White of Boston, you don't simply bar



White: Caught in the act

certain members of the press from press conferences, you take things more firmly in hand.

Steve Nevas, anchorman-reporter for WGBH-TV was recently assigned to cover a formal City Hall press conference on busing. Nevas has been out of mayoral favor since he did a series while at WBZ on White's questionable fundraising activities. George Regan, White's press aide, called WGBH and said Nevas was unwelcome at the busing forum, but the station sent him anyway.

As Nevas, with cameras rolling, approached the mayor's door, two plainclothes Boston police officers prevented him from entering. George Regan appeared and told Nevas to leave because the mayor felt he was a "biased reporter and could not cover him objectively." Nevas told Regan he would have to remove him physically. Eventually Regan let him in, but as soon as Mayor White entered the room, Regan pointed out the WGBH microphone. At which point White was captured on film trying, unsuccessfully, to disconnect it.

—RICK POZNIAK

## RATHER FOILED

### Dan Fumes As CBS Won't Ask Question

The fancy desserts and liquors were plentiful at the Washington, D.C., townhouse of CBS correspondent Fred Graham as about 20 guests, including Dan Rather, settled in to watch the first televised Carter-Ford debate. On the screen, when the 28½-minute gap occurred, the networks scrambled to fill the time with partisan interviews, with CBS's Lesley Stahl talking to Ford strategist Michael DuVal.

That's not the story, Rather said to himself. The

real story is how the hell did they lose the sound. Rather slipped into another room and started calling around trying to reach CBS control in New York. Eight minutes after he reached someone, the sound came back, and no one had answered Rather's question, leaving him to do a slow burn in Fred Graham's living room.

—JERRY BUCKLEY

## BASTA BOOLA

### Yalies Say They're The Best—But At What?

The current edition of *The Insiders' Guide To The Colleges*, a 400-page book that purportedly tells high school students what America's colleges are "really like," resolves one of the oldest arguments in academia with one sentence: "Yale today is the finest undergraduate college in the country."

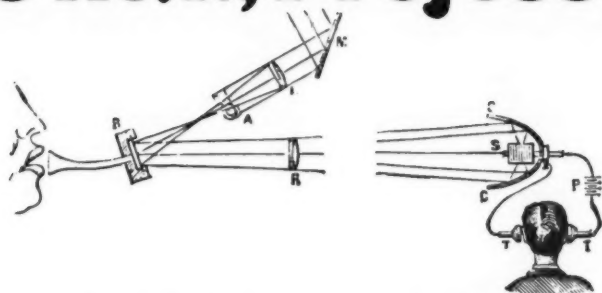
How did the book's editor arrive at this conclusion? Well, it might have something to do with the fact that the book is compiled and edited by the staff of the *Yale Daily News*.

The book concedes that Harvard and Princeton are fairly good schools—although not as good as Yale, of course. The rest of the country does not fare as well. "With a different student body, Stanford might be truly great," the *Guide* observes, but anyone interested in the best education is advised to forget the West Coast and "look to the Ives."

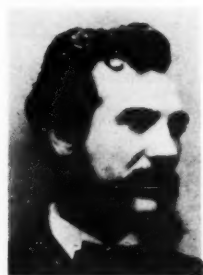
For all its boosterism, the book does contain at least one bit of truth. Craig Watson Mason, the Yale student who edited the book, explains in the introduction, "We attempt, by judicious editing, to present both sides, but these efforts seem doomed to failure."

—JOHN TIERNEY

# What's next, Professor Bell?



*The photophone transmitted voices on a beam of light in 1880.*



*Alexander Graham Bell*

"The greatest invention I have ever made; greater than the telephone." That's how Alexander Graham Bell rated his photophone, patented four years after the telephone, to transmit conversations on a beam of light. (Photophone = light-sound.) He actually demonstrated lightwave transmission of voices, but it would be nearly a century before it would become a practical reality.

The photophone was one of many ideas Bell proposed to improve the usefulness of his basic invention. Working with him on improvements were his assistants Thomas A. Watson, who received the world's first telephone call on March 10, 1876, and Charles S. Tainter. The sort of work they did would be called today "research and development".

Bell envisaged a telephone network linking the cities of the nation and eventually the whole world. But a voice could travel only a limited distance over a wire before it

weakened and became inaudible. So the first phones depended heavily on lung power. It is no coincidence that we speak of telephone "calls", or that the word "hello", the standard greeting in phone conversations, is kin to "holler".

For years many people looked for a way to make a voice reach from coast to coast, including engineers of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (the parent company of the Bell System), and its manufacturing and supply arm, the Western Electric Company. Some telephone people were much interested by a paper read to the American Institute of Electrical Engineers on October 20, 1906, by Dr. Lee de Forest.

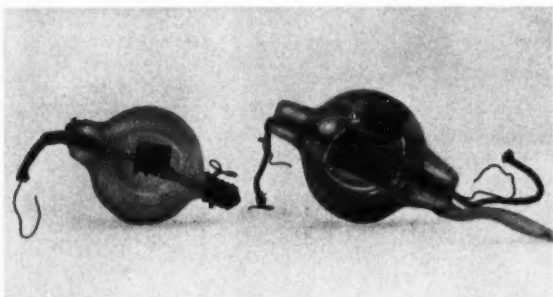
The paper described de Forest's new "audion" tube, a version of the vacuum tube used at that time in radio receiving sets. Basic theory told de Forest that his invention should detect *and amplify* tiny electric currents, such as those coming over the telephone



*In 1886 this special telephone set was used for long distance calls.*

wire. But his early models failed at amplification. He continued working on his own. And telephone engineers pursued other solutions.

By 1912 de Forest was ready to demonstrate an improved audion that did operate as an amplifier, although imperfectly. In the group of telephone people assembled for one of de Forest's demonstra-



*Lee de Forest's audion and an improved version developed by H. D. Arnold for long distance telephony.*

tions was Harold D. Arnold, 29, a brilliant physicist hired the year before. Arnold identified at once the audion's major problem: the vacuum pump de Forest was using left too much air inside the tube, with the result that its performance was erratic and unpredictable. As a consequence of financial support by AT&T of the Bell System's research and development program, Arnold could obtain the newest pumping equipment and achieve a much higher vacuum, and within a year he had the amplifier needed. AT&T and Western Electric engineers made further circuit changes needed for telephony, AT&T management arranged for manufacture under de Forest's basic patent, and the amplifier went into production. On January 25, 1915, Bell in New York repeated to Watson in San Francisco his famous words, "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you."

As the telecommunications industry

grew, the vacuum tube was improved many times, but by the 1940s it was reaching its inherent limitations. Scientists at Bell Laboratories saw promise in a class of materials called semiconductors. From their carefully thought-out search came the discovery in 1947 of the transistor effect—the amplification and control of the flow of electrons in a solid material. Again the enormous problems of putting the discovery into practical form were far more quickly and expertly solved by collaboration between people at Bell Labs and Western Electric than could ever have been the case otherwise.

The story of the search for ways to strengthen telephone voices shows, in a rather simple way, many of the elements of the Bell System's research and development effort as it is carried on today: A perceived need in telephone operations. Corporate management that emphasizes service improvement. A commitment to exploration in relevant areas of basic science. A development effort, adequately funded, to move from discovery to practical use. Free exchange of information among people in



*H. D. Arnold*

research, development and manufacturing. And finally use of the discovery in equipment or a product to meet the need originally perceived. That final stage is what gives a laboratory discovery the right to be truly called an "innovation". And the expectation that applicable new knowledge will be used in the Bell System makes it possible to commit each year the millions of

dollars necessary to search for it.

The amplifier story has an extra dimension, the use of innovations in many fields outside telephony. That is true of much Bell System research and development. It is corporate policy to publish new findings, to make new technology available to other companies through licensing arrangements, and to exchange technology with others. Vacuum tubes made possible radio-telephones, television broadcasting, improved phonographs and sound motion pictures. Scientists and engineers working for the Bell System made many contributions to all these innovations and the new industries that sprang from them. But the main objective of their investigations has been the improvement of the nation's telecommunications network and the myriad of services it provides.

The transistor, in its turn, gave birth to the whole new industry of solid-state electronics. It made practical such developments as the large-capacity computer for data processing, high-speed transmission of data between computers, space travel and communications via space satellites. Most important for the ordinary telephone user, the transistor made possible a new generation of switching machines for routing calls to their destinations—machines controlled by instructions stored in changeable memories. These electronic switching systems, now being installed, are many times faster than the best electromechanical systems. They provide enormously increased capacity and flexibility to meet the growth needs of the 1980s.

It is characteristic of a technologically

oriented industry that technology must be prepared in anticipation of needs. The search requires a huge investment, both of time and money. And success depends on careful planning and close coordination of effort, in a process that runs from basic scientific exploration through fundamental development work, specific design, manufacturing capability, distribution and delivery to the ultimate consumer. For many industries, including telecommunications, the process also includes activities in maintenance, servicing and operation.

In the Bell System, that process involves twenty-three regional operating companies, plus Bell Labs, Western Electric



*The transistor was invented at Bell Labs in 1947. Today, thousands of transistors can be made on one tiny integrated circuit chip.*



*Electronic switching systems, now in wide use, provide high speed and flexibility for the nation's telecommunications needs.*

and the Long Lines Department. All these parts share one goal: to provide telecommunications services at the lowest possible cost to everyone.

Such cooperation produces results.

According to the June 28, 1976, issue of *Business Week*:

By almost any measure, Bell Labs has contributed more to the telecommunications industry and more to the U.S. economy than any other research establishment....A major part of Bell Labs' charter is to keep well ahead in technology so that no significant development applicable to telecommunications will be unavailable to the Bell System. The bargaining power made available through extensive patent holdings gives AT&T ready access to the inventions of others when the company needs them.

Since 1925, the people at Bell Labs and Western Electric have received more than 24,000 U.S. patents, which have been made widely available to all of U.S. industry and the world.

Bell System research and development work is well underway on new communications technologies to meet the needs of telephone service in the future. For example, Bell scientists and engineers are now working on a practical way to use lightwaves for communications. They have already developed pinpoint light sources—light-emitting diodes, and lasers no larger than a grain of sand. (Both projects benefited from earlier Bell research on semiconductors.) To carry



*Lightwave communications technology, now being tested, uses new solid-state light sources and glass fibers to transmit phone calls.*

light around corners, or under city streets, they are using tiny strands of ultra-transparent glass called "lightguides." Right now an experimental lightwave communications system is being tested by Bell Labs and Western Electric engineers in Atlanta. Light and glass may one day join electricity and copper wire in the nationwide telecommunications network, and we may in fact "talk by light". Those are Alexander Graham Bell's words, describing his photophone.

One Bell System. It works.



**Bell System**

Wide World

**HELLBOX****CHEVY STUMPS****Comic Steals Political Spotlight**

Every political candidate wants a celebrity, and the hottest new endorser is Chevy Chase. Before the New York senatorial primary, Chase was at Columbia University lending a bit of charisma to his candidate Ramsey Clark, whom he introduced as a man "who is not going to say anything unusual. I don't hang around him a lot." While Clark talked about the bones of black men lying in the red dirt of Mississippi, the crowd watched as Chase swatted an insistent yellow jacket. When Clark finished discussing the

defense budget and economic injustice, the students applauded and then asked Chase for his autograph.

Chase's future as a politician's "pull guy" looks bright. For one thing, he's flexible, if not quite indiscriminate. He says he'd consider working for Jimmy Carter, although no one has asked him yet. And as soon as Clark lost, he announced he would campaign for winner Daniel P. Moynihan, even though "his beliefs are not necessarily mine."

—LINDA ABRAMS

**LATE EDITION****Long-Awaited Press \$19 Million In Red**

Still waiting for *The New York Press* to hit the newsstands? Don't hold your breath. It's been nearly four

years since oil millionaire John M. Shaheen first promised to unleash the business-oriented daily afternoon newspaper, and each successive target date for Volume I, Issue 1 has passed without apology or explanation. Meanwhile, more than \$19 million has been poured into the aborted project. That figure can be extrapolated from voluminous documents in New York State Supreme Court, where Shaheen and company have been sued for non-payment by Charles T. Main Inc., the architectural firm contracted to renovate the old *Morning Telegraph* building on Manhattan's West Side, and MGD Graphic Systems, supplier of the already-installed ultra-modern composing equipment and high-speed, four-color presses.

Main Inc. permanently halted all work on the dilapidated, seven-story structure

**Shaheen: perennial no-show**

in spring of 1975. In September 1976, MGD won the right, on appeal, to repossess machinery valued at \$3 million. Undaunted, *Press* executive vice president Peter L. Caras insisted in a recent telephone interview that—once again—building alternations would be completed, and—once again—that the charter issue would appear, this time by January 1, 1977.

—JERRY LAZAR

**SON OF GERM****Legionnaire's Disease Comes To Silver Screen**

Think that Hollywood has run through all possible disasters? Think again. The disaster blockbuster of 1977 will be based on the summertime epidemic of legionnaire's dis-

ease that struck last summer in Philadelphia. The movie will be shot there on location by a local crew.

In real life, the deaths of the victims were complicated and mysterious. But in movieland, it's simple. The film will open in a hotel room with a conventioner wearing flesh-colored gloves smeared with an ointment. He walks around to different rooms shaking the

hands of his comrades, many of whom proceed to die. It is soon disclosed that an unnamed underground organization has threatened mass death with germ warfare (to be conducted via handshake) unless they are paid a half-billion dollars by the government. The suspense mounts—and we wouldn't think of spoiling the ending.

—LIBBY BIANCHI

**HOME BOX HYPE****Time Tries Puffery To Save Movie Channel**

Seems that Home Box Office, the pay TV station owned by Time Inc., is having a bit of trouble. Viewers just aren't happy with the movies, and subscriptions are falling off. What to do? Well, thought Time Inc., why not take *On Air*, the monthly HBO program guide, and jazz it up so the viewers think they're getting terrific stuff? Accordingly, *On Air* managing editor and publisher Stephen Marmon was told to hype the offerings—as in "Mandingo, which HBO is screening tonight, is one of the greatest movies ever..." Marmon declined.

Time Inc. is presently advertising for a replacement for Marmon, but this time around, the stated job title for the person who will assemble the magazine is "promotion manager."



# NOW THE URBAN GUERRILLAS HAVE A REAL PROBLEM

## They're Trying To Make It In The Magazine Business

Most-wanted fugitives publish on the lam.

BY GABRIELLE SCHANG & RON ROSENBAUM

The people who bombed the Capitol are now in the magazine business. You could call them the most sought-after people in the media—three of them spent three years on the F.B.I.'s Ten Most Wanted list. The editors are members of the Weather Underground Organization. They call their publishing venture the Red Dragon Print Collective and they call their magazine *Osawatomie*.<sup>\*</sup> The F.B.I. calls them interstate fugitives from justice, armed and believed to be dangerous.

Somewhere in the United States—according to their own account—the Weather fugitives gather together over a clandestine printing press to produce bi-monthly issues of the magazine, collating the pages as they come off the press with gloved hands to avoid leaving fingerprints.

Should Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, Jeff Jones and the other Weather fugitives who write and edit *Osawatomie* be captured in the middle of a press run, they would collectively face years behind bars for acts of violence committed before they went underground. If convicted for the 25 bombings they've claimed credit for since then, each of them would probably face life. This sort of thing can add a certain urgency to meeting deadlines.

The magazine project is a recent development in the seven-year history of the Weather Underground Organization (WUO), although it is their second publishing venture (the first, a book of theory and history called *Prairie Fire*, also clandestinely printed, appeared in mid-1974). In the pages of *Osawatomie*, between the lines, in hints and asides, sometimes directly, it is possible to get a shadowy glimpse of an identity crisis in the lives of the Weather fugitives, many of whom were considered the best and the brightest leaders of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the 1960's. Consider the following juxtaposition.

On June 6, 1975, a nightwatchman in the Banco de Ponce in midtown Manhattan received a phone call from a woman who told him to evacuate the building immediately. A powerful explosion tore open the front of the bank building. In a communique found in a nearby phone booth, the WUO claimed credit for the bombing, in support of striking cement workers in Puerto Rico.

A few days later, a woman walked into the Eighth Street

Bookstore in lower Manhattan, carrying two heavy shopping bags that she checked behind the sales counter. She browsed a bit, then walked out, leaving her shopping bags behind. Ten minutes later the cashier received a call. "Look in the shopping bags," said the woman caller. "You'll find your copies of the new *Osawatomie*." A clerk at Cody's bookstore in Berkeley received a phone message instructing him to "look in the bushes across the street where we've dropped your new copies of *Osawatomie*." At Modern Times bookstore in San Francisco, personnel arriving early to unlock the doors discovered neatly-piled stacks of the magazine leaning against the storefront. About the same time, hundreds of individuals and bookstores received plain manila envelopes with a rubber-stamped fake return address, containing one or more of the latest issue.

In the 15 months since the Ponce bank bombing, there has been only one further bombing: the Salt Lake City headquarters of Kennecott Copper was hit on the September 1975 anniversary of Allende's downfall in Chile. But in that same 15 months there have been eight further deliveries of *Osawatomie*.

The shift from dynamite to printer's ink has not diminished the attention the Weather people have been getting from the F.B.I. The Bureau has dismantled, it claims, the now notorious "WeathFug" Squads. These were the special government strike forces in large cities whose furious and futile cross-country pursuit of the Weather fugitives from 1970 to 1974 involved multiple illegal break-ins, warrantless searches, bugs and burglaries. Recent revelations of WeathFug excesses have led to criminal investigations of at least 75 agents and many of the F.B.I.'s top leadership from that period, including the former number-two man in the Bureau, Mark Felt. It was, then, particularly ironic for Felt to hold up an issue of *Osawatomie* on "Face the Nation," because in using it to justify WeathFug illegalities, Felt gave the Weather Underground the kind of network TV exposure they couldn't get with just another bombing.

Despite such setbacks for the Bureau, the hunt goes on. You can follow it from the F.B.I.'s point of view in the pages of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *San Francisco Examiner* where re-

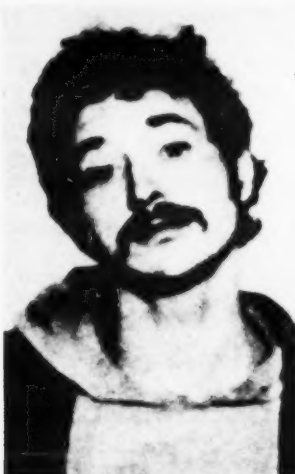
*Gabrielle Schang is editor of Alternative Media magazine. Ron Rosenbaum is executive editor of MORE.*

<sup>\*</sup>The name *Osawatomie* is derived from the 1856 Battle of Osawatomie, Kansas, in which John Brown and his abolitionist guerrillas defeated a superior force of slavery supporters.



#### BERNARDINE DOHRN

Emerged as Weather Underground spokesperson when she signed communiques following bombings of Capitol, Pentagon, Gulf Oil, IT&T. On 10 Most Wanted list for 3 years. Helped Tim Leary break jail. Now 34. An author of *Prairie Fire*. Appeared in Emile D'Antonio's film *Underground*, in which she said: "If people didn't support there being an underground we wouldn't be there."



#### BILL AYRES

Lived with Diana Oughton, Weatherwoman blown up in 1970 Manhattan townhouse bomb explosion. Signed communique taking responsibility for Chicago Haymarket Square statue bombing. In *Underground* said: "We made many mistakes. We're not a terrorist organization...the real obligation of revolutionaries is to awaken people..." Now 31, has been listed as co-editor of recent issues of *Osawatimie*.



#### JEFF JONES

Now 29, he became SDS organizer at Antioch college. Helped lead 1968 takeover of Columbia. In *Underground* spoke of his participation in Capitol bombing, printing of *Prairie Fire*, and the fugitive life: "Everytime I see a policeman I feel a rush of adrenalin. I remind myself who I am, what my name is, what my numbers are."

## EDITORS AT LARGE

porters Ron Koziol and Ed Montgomery, known for their excellent F. B. I. sources, regularly print "exclusives" about the travels of the Weather Underground leadership. If you believe these reports, Kathy Boudin met with Patty Hearst in New York City, visited Moscow and returned home last year. And Jeff Jones somehow "coordinated" the creation of a West Coast underground group called the Emiliano Zapata Unit which a Bureau informant tried to link with an assassination plot against Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford, before it was revealed that the informant *himself* actually manufactured the Zapata unit—much to the chagrin of the Bureau and the other hapless members of the Zapata group. How the Bureau is able to know as much as it says it does about the Weather leaders without capturing any of them is an interesting question. But it is clear that someone wants to keep the public interested in the hunt.

Other *Tribune* and *Examiner* stories tell us that a Federal grand jury was investigating how the Weather Underground bought paper for its publishing ventures. A "West Coast Communist" did it for them, one report alleged. On the other hand, Mark Felt, who certainly has inside F.B.I. sources, told "Face the Nation" that *Osawatomie* was actually printed in Cuba and smuggled into the U.S. through the port of New Orleans.

The printing venture seems to have the Bureau baffled. The most dramatic attempt to penetrate it involved F.B.I. informer and would-be Presidential assassin, Sara Jane Moore. Her venture into Weatherland came sometime after the clandestine printing of *Prairie Fire* and before the first appearance of *Osawatomie*, in the spring of 1975. In her pose as an enthusiastic convert to the still vigorous post-SLA West Coast revolutionary scene,



"I'd like to call attention to this little publication. . . . This is called *Osawatomie*. This is the publication of the Weather Underground. They claim credit for hundreds of bombings, including the Capitol and the Pentagon. . . . These are national security cases. . . ."

—former Deputy F.B.I. Director Mark Felt on "Face the Nation," August 29, 1976.

Sara Jane somehow managed to make contact with representatives of the Weather publishing collective.

She told the fugitives that she knew someone who was privately wealthy and trustworthy, who might be willing to underwrite the cost of underground publishing operations. Sara Jane offered her services as a go-between. "All I need are the plates," she reportedly declared at a secret session with the Weather people. Her eagerness to get so close to the publishing operation caused suspicion and led the Weather Underground to sever all contact with her.

The world to which Sara Jane returned was a murky, more confusing one, with its own underground, dominated by successors to the Symphonese Liberation Army (SLA) and its own brand of underground magazines. Lit-

tle publicized outside the West Coast (except as occasional addenda to Patty Hearst stories, as when one of them, the New World Liberation Front [NWLF] bombed two Hearst family castles during the trial) the groups composing this new underground are nevertheless far more prolific bombers than the Weather Underground. In the two years since the SLA kidnapped Patty, this burgeoning underground network has been credited with more than 100 bombings—over 40 by the NWLF alone—ranging in scope from simple pipe bombings to the single most powerful explosion ever set off by a political group in U.S. history, the bombing of the San Francisco office of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms division of the Treasury Department.

Unlike the fairly well-

known fugitives in the Weather Underground, the people in the NWLF-dominated underground have yet to be identified. It appears likely from the language and emphasis of their communiqués, that they come, like the SLA, from the ranks of prisoner's movements, that some are black and that few have the privileged backgrounds and education of the people who form the Weather Underground. Virtually all we know about them can be gleaned from the pages of two fairly obscure magazines called *Dragon* and *The Urban Guerrilla* (TUG). Unlike *Osawatomie*, both are printed publicly. Their contents, however, consist almost entirely of material transmitted to them via the underground: communiqués following bombings, congratulations and criticism for other groups' bombings, discussions of security techniques and a review of the etiquette of bombings (how much warning is adequate to insure evacuation of a target site) and discussions of political strategy.

Both magazines have been connected in one way or another with the various underground units that supply them with copy. James Kilgore and Kathy Soliah, two former members of the group that publishes *Dragon*, the Bay Area Research Collective (BARC), are currently political fugitives, Kilgore on pipe bomb charges and Soliah because she is suspected of harboring Patty Hearst. And one member of the editorial staff that published *The Urban Guerrilla* has publicly announced that he maintains a secret two-way communications link with his absentee editorial board, the New World Liberation Front.

"We take these people [the NWLF] very seriously," admits Charles Bates, the man in charge of the F.B.I.'s San Francisco field office, the man who directed the hunt for Patty. "These people are committing scores of bombings. Yes, we are actively



searching for them."

Since the bombers themselves have so far managed to remain invisible, the focus of the search seems to be the offices of *Dragon* and *TUG*, since both magazines are considered portals to the underground and the individuals involved in their production couriers and go-betweens.

Three reporters recently experienced at gunpoint the intensity of Federal interest in these magazines. On August 26 of this year, the three journalists (one of them from *MORE*) were pulled over by two unmarked government cars and a motorcycle while driving back from a visit to the offices of *Dragon* and *TUG*. Seven plainclothes agents pulled the reporters from their car, frisked them at gunpoint and fingerprinted two of them. The leader of the squad identified himself as Mr. Patrick Webb of the F.B.I. He claimed he was acting on a tip that fugitive SLA sympathizer James Kilgore (indicted that day on a pipe bomb possession charge) was in the car.

Underground magazines have several built-in audiences in addition to the lawmen who scrutinize them for clues. The folks down at the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, for instance, are avid readers, so avid in fact that they've almost turned themselves into a wholesale reprint house for *Osawatomie* and *Dragon*. They regularly hold hearings on the seriousness of "Terroristic Activity Inside the Weatherman Movement" and "Terrorist Bombings and Law Enforcement Intelligence." The appendices to the published transcripts of these hearings are replete with reproductions of covers, tables of contents and representative articles and communiques from the magazines. From these compilations they have created a nightmare vision of a vast, united terrorist underground, a specter none of the individual groups lay claims to even in their most inspired and optimistic rhetoric.

In fact, one reason why underground groups are such devoted readers and corres-

pondents of a magazine like *Dragon* is the chance it gives them to converse at long distance with other underground cadres they could never arrange to meet in person.

The family and friends of the Weather fugitives are faithful readers of *Osawatomie*. It has been almost seven years since they've seen the 40 or so Weather people who went underground early in the winter of 1970. Issues of *Osawatomie*, though filled mainly with accounts of oppression, struggle and analysis, do, in some ways, represent the closest thing to a letter home from the fugitives.

One thing these disparate audiences have in common is a curiosity about how it's done—how the fugitives manage to keep such an elaborate publishing system a secret. The physical properties of an issue of *Osawatomie* suggest a fairly extensive and expensive printing operation. The WUO doesn't use cheap paper; they use a 50-pound vellum or smooth, firm-coat white stock

paper that costs approximately 32 cents a pound as compared to the 17 cents ordinary newsprint would cost. Paper costs for an average 32-page, 8½ x 11-inch issue with a press run of 5,000 copies would come to something like \$640. According to one experienced New York printer, it would take anywhere from 12 hours to four days to complete a press run, depending on the number of people involved and their experience at plate-making and printing. Another educated guess says that the Weather press could be a Multilith 11 x 17. That type of printing press costs anywhere from \$1,000 to \$9,000 and generally weighs 1,150 pounds. Heavy, yes, but not impossible to disassemble and pack into the rear of a small to medium-sized van.

Assuming that the production of *Osawatomie* is a labor of love for the fugitives and that none are paid for their work, the cost of publishing an issue could range anywhere from \$1,000 to \$6,000. Printing itself is not outrageously expensive, even if

three or four colors are used and the photographs are duotoned, particularly when the press is the property of the publisher.

The decision to go to all this trouble to produce a magazine, with its attendant security risk, was a major turning point in the lives of the Weather fugitives.

It was not until late 1973, after four years on the run, that they became sufficiently confident of their security system to stage large-scale clandestine reunions of underground cells, much less publish a magazine. Bernardine Dohrn recalls in the sixth issue of *Osawatomie*: "We were attempting to reorganize after a long period of dispersal and fragmentation. We were debilitated..."

This debilitation, she explains, was not physical exhaustion from being on the run, but a temporary failure of imagination. They could go on bombing forever, it seemed, but they wanted to do more than spend their lives as an isolated and symbolic underground. Their new ambition, they decided after much devoted study of orthodox texts by Marx and Lenin, was to become the underground vanguard of an overground mass movement. The magazine would be the link between under and overground. (Some success in this strategy is indicated by the growing number of the aboveground Weather sympathizer groups that distribute the magazine, such as the Prairie Fire Organizing Committees and the John Brown Book Club.)

Publishing *Osawatomie* has become a full-time job for some of the key leadership of the Weather Underground who edit it. Chief among them are Dohrn, Ayers and Jones, who co-sign many editorials. The regular publishing schedule they have adhered to suggests a stability in the lives of the fugitives. It is difficult not to speculate that they may be living in the same town somewhere, perhaps the same

## WHERE TO GET THEM

**Osawatomie:** John Brown Book Club  
Box 2283 Seattle, Washington 98122  
Single copies 50 cents.

**Dragon:** Bay Area Research Collective  
Box 4344 Berkeley, California 947040  
Six-issue subscription \$5.

**The Urban Guerrilla**  
423 Oak Street San Francisco, California 94102  
Single copies 50 cents

house, holding jobs as librarians, waitresses or social workers. They certainly don't seem to be slinking around phone booths by moonlight. The decreasing frequency of Weather bombings may mean they just don't have time for it anymore. But there is also an increasingly academic and orthodox Leninist tone to their written statements, a sense that they may be abandoning bombing as no longer tactically useful, perhaps even a symptom of an adventurism they've outgrown.

Adventurism abounds in the pages of *Dragon* and *The Urban Guerrilla*, if you judge them by the standards of *Osawatomie*. If the Weather Underground magazine is beginning to sound more and more like early Lenin, the two post-SLA magazines are late Dostoevsky, their pages reflecting the passion, energy, intrigue and betrayal of the world of *The Possessed*. All of which makes for fascinating reading for armchair adventurers once you learn to read behind the rhetoric.

*Dragon* emerged in 1975 after the failure of *The Berkeley Barb*, the last of the old-fashioned "underground papers" born in the 60's (the others now call themselves "alternative papers") to cope with the legal and security problems created by the burgeoning growth of a real underground. When the *Barb*, a traditional mail drop for underground missives, stopped

printing them, *Dragon* was created as an open forum for communiques from underground groups to the public and to each other. The *Dragon* people brought trained eyes and ears to the thorny problem of determining the authenticity of a communique. But problems in that area—a number of groups, for instance, would do a bombing and announce they were a unit of the NWLF before the NWLF's "Central Command" would "certify" them. This caused embarrassment when one, The Zapata Unit, turned out to be led by an informant. The underground NWLF decided it needed a magazine of its own—a house organ published by aboveground NWLF sympathizers with material smuggled to them from the underground via the NWLF Central Command (the portion of the NWLF responsible for all its bombings and soon to begin functioning as an absentee editorial board).

Thus was born, in February 1974, *The Urban Guerrilla* (*TUG*), and thus did the NWLF become the first terrorist group to issue its own press cards. The people using those press cards live together in a rambling two-story gray house on Oak Street in San Francisco which also serves as headquarters for *TUG*.

The three reporters who visited this portal to the underground last August were greeted at the door by a mem-

ber of the group who checked their ID's closely, then led them upstairs to the communal living room where they were introduced to Ande Lougher and Tom Notty, two members of the magazine staff. Ande's trouble with the law illustrates the strange relationship between the underground bomber-editors and the magazine. When a special Federal grand jury subpoenaed her for questioning about Central Command, the underground editorial board, she read a four-part statement to the grand jury, the last part of which warned them that the NWLF had physically attacked the home of the foreman of a previous grand jury when it summoned a *TUG* staffer.

"While I have no wish to see any of you injured or killed," Ande told the grand jury, "at the same time I could not ask them to stay their hand." The grand jury proceeded to indict her for "endeavoring to intimidate a grand jury." She's now out on \$40,000 bail.

For its part, the magazine didn't hesitate to use its journalistic resources in an attempt to forge a counterattack against this offensive by the authorities. After Ande's indictment, the magazine collective warned the F.B.I. in a written statement: "If you persist we will counterattack. Our photographers will take your pictures as you enter and leave your fortresses. Our reporters will note the license numbers on your cars. We will locate your residences and follow your movements. All this information will be reprinted in *The Urban Guerrilla*. Consider this carefully."

The conversation with Ande and Tom at *TUG* headquarters had just turned to the tricky legal and security problems that arise when half your group is underground, bombing and editing, and the other half is above, producing a magazine and taking all the heat, when a missing member of the collective, Jacques Rogiers, walked in, fresh from

a secret rendezvous with Central Command. Jacques brought with him a plump baggie full of marijuana and a personal message written to one of the magazine's staffers, both items provided by the absentee editors.

How Jacques manages to keep these meetings secret when surveillance is as close as it seems to be, is a mystery involving pre-arranged codes and a whole series of further steps that have so far confounded law enforcement agents anxious to learn the identity of the NWLF's Central Command. Jacques, the guiding spirit of the whole NWLF publishing enterprise, is a fortyish ex-con (in prison many years on marijuana charges) with a toothless, smiling visage that brings to mind pictures of Meher Baba, the mystic avatar. In fact, Jacques is a follower of the late Indian sage whose disarmingly simple philosophy—"Don't worry. Be Happy"—he has somehow synthesized with his belief in the NWLF and revolutionary armed struggle.

Although Jacques is not a bomb-throwing guerrilla himself, he has pioneered some highly unorthodox uses of the power of the press in support of NWLF campaigns. For instance, Jacques might visit the tenants of a building owned by one of the landlords the NWLF has designated as a target of their "scumlord campaign." He'll show his NWLF press card and play the role of investigative reporter, seeking out their grievances. These he'll report in the pages of *The Urban Guerrilla* or pass on directly to the underground Central Command, who in turn waste no time taking reprisals against the landlord, ranging from threats, to sabotage and bombing until the tenants are happy. The NWLF can claim some concrete successes in these calculated local campaigns. A recent *San Francisco Examiner* story headlined "Bayview Gives in To NWLF Demands" reported that a bank

had agreed to rehabilitate slum properties it owned after an NWLF bomb caused \$20,000 in damage to one of its branches.

This kind of explosive clout is the sort of thing most investigative reporters wouldn't dare to fantasize about. It has led to a series of confrontations between grand juries and members of the magazine, confrontations that quickly escalated beyond the usual realm of First Amendment questions. The Central Command smashed windows in the house of the grand jury foreman and made threatening phone calls to the judge—who changed his mind and decided not to jail Jacques for contempt. Since then, half the magazine's staff has been back and forth to grand juries, with threats, citations and indictments flying back and forth wildly.

Why do they do it? What are the people who put out *Osawatimie* trying to do underground and what is the attraction of the underground for the people who put out *Dragon* and *TUG*?

Maybe Bernardine Dohrn captured it in a kind of "I have a dream" passage in a speech she gave to a clandestine reunion of Weather Underground leadership just three days before their last bombing in more than a year. She told the assembled fugitives about a moment in the turbulent period following the collapse of the Czarist regime and the later Bolshevik takeover. The provisional government was in an uproar: everyone wanted leadership but no one had developed an ideology or a practice to deal with the chaos. What should we do, we're helpless, the Mensheviks moaned; if only there was a party ready to lead. Lenin stepped forward. "There is," he said. "We're ready."

Bernardine and her fugitive comrades are ready when the time comes, if it comes. Meanwhile, they've got a magazine to put out. ■

## MASS MEDIA

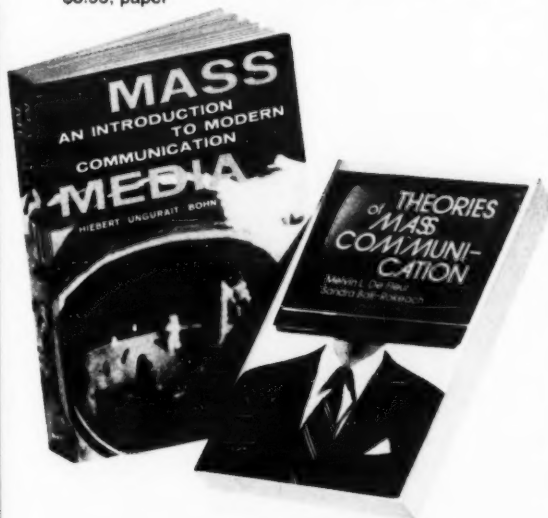
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# WHAT'S WHAT AT WHO'S WHO

## Progress Report On The Institution of Celebrityhood

An exegesis of the varieties of modesty.

BY GARRY WILLS

*Art is an assortment of sizes—areas—solids and vacuums—their proportions—their measurements—their lights and their shadows. These compounded illusions—whether they jell into realism or abstractionism is of small moment—but what is of importance is whether the adhesion of man's theories be crucified—welded into a self of its own—holding man's force and energy—translating his feeling and knowledge into an art separate and powerful enough to be of lasting endurance.*

—Ivan Albright

This mini-manifesto is brought to you courtesy of *Who's Who in America*. Note it well. Where else can you get the latest word on the crucifixion of adhesion?

The current *Who's Who* invited people to append sermonettes to their coded autobiographies—to tell us (briefly) about “the principles, ideas, goals and standards that have helped them achieve success and high regard.” It is not a plan likely to last beyond this edition. For one thing, only the obscure choose to tell us why they are famous. For another, they do a poor job of it—calling to mind Chesterton's amazement that men who write books about success cannot even succeed in writing books. Henceforth, everyone who knows what's

Garry Wills is the Washington Irving Professor at Union College.

what will be very careful not to preach in *Who's Who*.

Of course, I recognized some of the names that carried an italicized little message at the bottom of their entry—but not many. Jerzy Kosinski performs on cue—the result, no doubt, of talk-show training. Isaac Asimov plugs his many wares—but he lists him-

**Isaac Asimov:** *I have been avid to learn and avid to teach. When I was seven years old I taught my five-year-old sister how to read. I have been fortunate to be born with a restless and efficient brain, with a capacity for clear thought and an ability to put that thought into words. Placing it all at the service of my avidity, I have published 164 books as of now and am well thought of in consequence. As you can see, none of this is to my credit. I am the beneficiary of a lucky break in the genetic sweepstakes.*



self as an educator, and we shall see that this category is unsilenceable. A few congressmen pipe up, but they will do anything to relieve their general obscurity. After a while one begins to cheer those who did not fall into the trap.

For some reason people named Anderson are very taciturn. Hope that your daughter marries an Anderson.

I'm happy to say that most journalists keep mum—though Herb Kaplow is an exception, telling us about the responsibility of the press. Does Max Lerner count as a “journalist”? Perhaps—but not as a grammarian. Here is his testimony:

*I have believed in love and work, and in their linkage. I have believed that we are neither angels or [sic] devils, but humans, with clusters of potentials in both directions [sic]. I am neither an optimist or [sic] pessimist, but a possibilist.*

As I say, most of my colleagues stay commendably mum—Bonnie Angelo of *Time* going so far as to hush up her birth date.

What is a bit surprising is the silence of preachers, who make little fuss here, and, for that matter, not much of an appearance. Mencken felt that earlier editions of *Who's Who* fished a bit too deep in clerical waters, landing every bishop or elder who ever ascended the pulpit or passed the basket. That does not seem to be true anymore. My own bishop, William Borders, who just made a splashy fool of himself in the papers by his protective handling of the slippery Pallotine priests, does not show up. Nor is advice offered by the more famous preachers of our time—not by Billy Graham or Norman Vincent Peale. Not even by Rod McKuen or Shirley MacLaine.

The champion preachers of the book are all those who list themselves as educators. And there is an endless supply of them. If Mencken could see

**I.F. Stone:** *To write the truth as I see it; to defend the weak against the strong; to fight for justice; and to seek, as best I can, to bring healing perspectives to bear on the terrible hates and fears of mankind in the hope of some day bringing about one world, in which men will enjoy the differences of the human garden instead of killing each other over them.*



this edition he would have to grant that deans have taken the place of deacons, and college presidents of bishops. After forming this impression by browsing in the huge two volumes, I confirmed it by a rough count of two letters (“A” and “K”) and part of a third (“L”). The educators are not only heavily represented in general, they run away with the preaching prize. In “A” alone, there are 43 educators who sound off, to only one rabbi and one bishop. In “K,” there are 34 educators to one clergyman. In “L,” I counted 21 educators and still had not come to a clergyman. These educators all seem to have received a fatal dose of commencement addresses. One, by the name of Anastos, writes: “I believe that it is the responsibility of each educator to receive high the ‘torch of knowledge.’” I wonder what he was high on when he received his torch.

The next busiest preachers

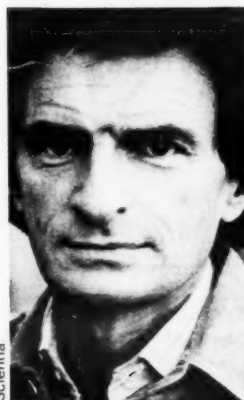
in the book are businessmen, whose sermons are practically indistinguishable from those of the college presidents. (Given the principal duties of college presidents, perhaps these categories should be merged.) I counted 28 businessmen in "A," 18 in "B" and 16 in "L." Third came the lawyers—12 in "A," nine in "K," seven in "L." Everyone else lagged far behind these three categories, with here an architect and there a numismatist. Most of the "authors" who preach seem to have written children's books or something about woolly animals.

It is harder to give a definite count to *themes* covered in these fervorinos, the most salient of which is that of fulfillment, of self-expression. Success is being one's own man, living for one's maximum self-expansion. Taken simply on its own terms, that theme might suggest Americans are selfish or hedonistic. But two other themes run close behind the "fulfillment" one, and are usually associated with it—God and Work. Many of these people feel impelled to confess that they did not endow themselves with their talent. (I thought, checking their prose, that the question of talent was still open; but they assume the answer.) Harvey Jerome Amster, a physicist, even accuses himself—surely unjustly—of excessive humility. Most suggest that they are fulfilled because they used their "God-given talents." How did they do this? By hard work. These paragraphs move ankle-deep in good honest sweat. Self-fulfillment becomes, through the intermediary of work, self-sacrifice. But then self-sacrifice becomes, through another divine intervention, self-fulfillment. "I worked hard, and God made me rich" is a rude paraphrase of the basic sermon. Success and virtue are necessarily joined—sometimes in ingenious ways. America, religion and success

all mean the same thing. Or, as one man puts it: "The Ten Commandments are a way of life, liberty and happiness." Early to bed and early to rise makes man or woman unbearable.

It is understandable that educators feel they must speak up. It is not simply that they are paid to teach. Education has become America's religion. It is the one thing we cannot take or leave. Everyone must not only profess belief in it, but daily practice it

**Jerzy Kosinski:** *The phrase "doing one's own thing" is really no more than a mockery uttered by people whose own thing is to be part of an amorphous supergang. Some of us insist to have the courage to give our lives if the need arises. Few of us have the courage to face it as it comes to us day by day. What is needed now is more international trade between the West and the East. These things are based on commercial and power interests that are the prize antagonists of personal integrity. What is needed now is more non-political affirmation of every individual's right to have new experiences and to express these responses openly, as the final proof that the heart has "no dictator," as well as "no country."*



Scientia

for all his or her formative years. We force children toward the baptismal waters of the classroom, to be liberally sprinkled with chalk dust. These are our initiation rites.

Since education is the prerequisite for *success*, it must be a path to *God*. Education develops the talents God gave us; it vindicates the ways of God to America. The new preachers must keep up this evangelical patter, from the center of our last catechetical redoubt.

But it is a catechism without a creed. Those who preach it are not in love with a cause or god or doctrine above and outside themselves, but with a process—with mere progress from grade to grade, sheer passage working its ritual magic. The trouble with preaching a process is that you can offer no object of desire or admiration but the product of that process. Which means the educators have to extoll themselves, the educated. This explains their readiness to enlighten us about the "high regard" they have achieved. And any evangelist is working at a disadvantage when he has to admit that the good news he brings is—himself.

I don't mean to say, of course, that God is absent from these self-proclamations. Far from it. But God is made to depend just a little too crudely on His choicest handiwork—who happens to be bringing us this message. Did we really have to wait for these sermonettes to hear that Joe Doakes endorses the Sermon on the Mount? Did the authors think we would not stumble on that text—or on the Ten Commandments, or the Declaration of Independence—unless alerted to it in the small italics of *Who's Who*? Self-advertising only becomes revolting when it is another way of advertising God.

God has no entry in *Who's Who*. But it is a long time since I saw his name taken so often in vain. ■

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# I GOT MY SWIMMING POOL BY CHOOSING PRELL OVER BRAND X

## Driven By Lust For "Real" People, Madison Avenue Will Do Anything For An "Honest" Plug

### Where do the real people in TV commercials come from?

BY MARK N. GRANT

The television medium has always been insatiable for Moments of Truth—from "Will the real \_\_\_\_\_ please stand up?" to those quick-cut close-ups of game show winners jumping up and down like maniacal pogo sticks, to the six o'clock news's preoccupation with the private grief of relatives of murder victims, to, of course, "Candid Camera." It hasn't escaped advertisers. Thus the explosion in the last few years of "real-people" testimonial commercials: the man-in-the-street telling an interviewer how much he likes the sponsor's product; the housewives on the hidden-camera taste tests; the satisfied consumer's letter to the manufacturer; and that apotheosis of self-conscious testimonials (a Mr. and Mrs. Adams of Oregon City, Oregon) proclaiming, on camera, "Thanks to Cold Power, we're not only clean, we're famous!"

To the innocent observer watching him on a TV commercial for the first time, Leonard Olds is some phantasm of videotronic sleight-of-hand materialized out of nowhere, dipping his hands in two dishes of shampoo suds, one his shampoo, one, it turns out . . . the sponsor's product, Prell.

But to hear the actual Leonard Olds, 38, a schoolteacher from San Marcos, California, unspool the reels behind the scenes, it happened this way: "The guy had me put my hands in the two soap dishes and asked me, which one feels this way or that way? They didn't say the one on the left is the Prell, but when I put my hands in the bowls it turned out the Prell one was warm and the other was pretty obviously cold. I assumed the warm one was the one to choose. You were kind of led along and you reacted almost exactly the way they wanted you to. You had to be pretty damn dumb not to recognize what was going on."

How does a genuinely unsolicited testimonial television commercial come about? Marjorie Pope of Malibu, California, dragging her metal detector through wet sand at Malibu Beach, uncovered an old Timex watch still running. She wrote a letter to Timex hoping to get a new watch, and a year and a half later was called by Timex to ask if she'd like to re-enact her experience in a commercial. She was flown to New York for a filming at Jones Beach by the EUE/Screen Gems production house. The very same watch, re-buried under wet sand, again came up ticking.

Mark Grant is a freelance writer living in New York City.

The big advertisers have become so enamored of the advertising potential of these kinds of happenstances that they've set about devising ways—like warming the Prell—to insure they will happen. These techniques include pre-scouting locations, pre-testing product demonstrations, pre-screening participants, interviewer manipulation, tricks and lies of film editing, cash payment inducements and actual rehearsals.

Allen Funt, artistic godfather of the technique, is outraged at the uses to which his technique has been put. "The intrinsic material may be honest, but the lie is in the omission or the selection." In "Candid Camera," he notes, "the omission ratio is the same but we're not trying to prove anything. The way 'Candid Camera' is done is to hope you'll get the unexpected. The way real-people commercials are done is to insure you'll get the expected."

"The obscenity," Funt rails, "of flashing a sign on the TV screen that says 'hidden camera commercial,' when they've brought people into a room where they know they're going to

### CLASSIC REAL PEOPLE COMMERCIALS



Steven L. Borns

**The bold-stroke invasion of privacy:**

The announcer offers surprised housewife \$50 for a dirty shirt, whereupon he savagely rips it in two in order to conduct a comparison-washing.

get a test, covered the sign of the film production company on the set and loaded all the factors in their favor, and *then* to say it's hidden camera. If all the other factors are such giveaways, what difference does it make?" As it happens, many directors of the commercials (notably at the Eye-View Company, which does real-people commercials exclusively) are "Candid Camera" film crew alumni, much to Funt's chagrin. "For 10 years I begged them not to do this," he moans. Funt successfully sued the makers of two early examples of the genre who plagiarized his trademark. "Now no one uses the phrase 'candid,'" he says.

The typical testimonial commercial is designed on a kind of "Jeopardy" principle: the advertising agency lays out a finished storyboard (script) and then back-pedals "to find people to fit it," as market researcher Tom Dale of Manhattan's Penthouse U puts it. Adds a creative producer at the BBDO agency: "You create a structure up front so you know where the reactions will fit in. The client has already tested the product favorably beforehand, so it's a good risk to go for viewers. You're improving your odds."

In the type of testimonial commercial advertisers call a "conversion," for example, the copywriters design a product demonstration along a single parameter of its performance to load the odds for a positive result. In one Zest commercial, a photograph is dipped in two dishes of soap suds, but only the Zest suds leave no residue on the photo. The test works only in hard water, so it had to be shot in the hard-water cities of Chicago and St. Petersburg. In an Ivory Snow commercial, a housewife squeezes two piles of laundry, one washed with her regular brand, one with Ivory Snow, and finds the latter softer. What neither she nor the viewer know is that the pile formerly washed in Brand X had to be re-washed several times in Ivory to remove enough of the feel of Brand X to make it palpably different.

Once the storyboard is drawn up, the advertising agencies hire research companies to canvass communities, shopping centers and even specific stores to determine where the product is in particularly wide consumer use. (According to one interviewer, for instance, Anaheim, California, is Beacon Wax country.) Hidden mike tests, an inexpensive way of dry-running on location, are often sent ahead to further test the waters for endorsement potential.

Over the last few years the technology of endorser-scouting has become more sophisticated. Only a few years back the directors of a Shell gasoline commercial waited three days at a Shell station and couldn't get anybody to praise their product. But now research companies are skilled enough not only to get bodies that will say yes, but to get bodies that will look right. "Procter & Gamble often calls us because we know how to screen for their look," notes Tom Dale of Penthouse U research. Generally, what they're looking for are middling (but not too) good looks, camera presence and a non-New Yorkese, middle-America quality, although for specific products the criteria may be narrower. As Leonard Olds, the Prell chooser, recalls, "I had first interviewed for a Trac II and a dictionary, but I didn't sell myself or something."

Once the ad agency has zeroed in on a site, the researchers approach shoppers at stores or phone housewives with a series of generalized market research questions—so it's not obvious what information is really being solicited. "If they're going for Tide and they ask you in the supermarket, 'Do you use Tide' and you say Oxydol, then after a couple more questions they'll say, thank you, goodbye," says actor-interviewer Bob Kaliban. "But if you say Tide, you'll be picked, although they'll ask you several more irrelevant questions to throw you

Diana Mara Henry



#### The out-and-out false-spontaneous re-enactment:

*In this genre, real people whose comments were previously recorded for market research are called back to re-enact themselves speaking their own words. In one example (not pictured) Sharon Willey finishes a tennis game and runs up to the announcer at center court who hands her a can in a wrapper. In the split-instant before the wrapper is off completely, before recognition could possibly set in, Ms. Willey exclaims (in pear-shaped tones), "Arrid Extra Dry!" as if surprised.*

off-track—like what shampoo do you use, what deodorant do you use."

Those who make it past this first round are asked back as many as three times for further market research testing, although beyond square one the market research tag is merely a ploy designed 1) to draw even more favorable reactions through further interviewing, and 2) to then herd the people into range of the hidden camera. The "research center" for these follow-up interviews may be a blind for a TV studio with one-way mirrors with cameras hidden behind them; EUE/Screen Gems dummies up a studio on West 54th Street in Manhattan for cake tests. Alternately, the film crew may choose to camouflage itself right in the supermarket; while shooting in a San Francisco store, the Panel Film Company masqueraded as Panel Electrical repairmen.

Adding further to the masquerade is the film crew's behavior. Says director John Horvath of Eye-View Films: "It's like a bank robbery, or 'Mission Impossible' or *The Sting*. We have to remember not to talk while the lady starts talking for the sound man." The crew may also develop a code of secret signals; "How's the weather?" may be a cue to roll the camera. Incredibly, sometimes the lights and cameras will be running out in the open air, but the crew gives the participants a cover story that the client wants to make a market research film. (According to Burke, Pulse and other leading research firms, there's practically no such thing as filmed market research). At this point in the screening, small cash come-ons become a factor. In fact, it was a factor from the outset for Gail Silverstein of St. Petersburg, Florida, who wound up eventually in a Zest commercial. "I was on my way home from work," she says. "A slight friend said they were testing soap and needed 200 girls. She said there was some money in it, so I thought I'd try it."

"A lot of them do it because it's a few extra dollars, but it's only pocket money," says veteran interviewer Bob Kennedy. The fee may be raised from an initial \$10 to \$35 with each

additional callback. One prescreened, Michael Brennan, who had first been approached by researchers while he was waiting for a train at the Ardsley-on-Hudson, New York, railroad station, was paid \$35 to come back a week later with all his morning toiletries—toothpaste, cologne, shampoo—for an open-camera “market research” film. He ended up shaving on camera for an Edge commercial. And in a commercial for Cascade dishwashing detergent filmed in a southern California shopping mall, women who had unsuspectingly tipped off through the market research questions that they were Cascade users were, at the end of the question battery, rewarded with transistor radios and hair-dryers for “being so nice,” according to one source on the shoot (Calgonite users were presumably sent packing). However, the gifts had to be picked up at an area where cameras were hidden. While there, the user would be asked again the very questions about the product she’d already answered favorably and secretly photographed as if for the first time.

Because these fees and gifts are rather small and, in a strict legal sense, payment for research, the networks don’t consider them inducements. As Ralph Daniels, NBC vice president of Broadcast Standards Administration, graphically puts it: “If a dog is half-starved before a dog food commercial but it doesn’t distort his normal eating habits, the stage at which he would normally eat, then we see nothing wrong with it. And if a person says peanut butter is peanuty, whether he’s surprised or knows in advance, all that counts is that the consumer’s claim can be backed up in the advertiser’s own words.” But the Screen Actors Guild objects. “The ad agencies will say they didn’t pay them to say they liked Tide, they did it in a way so they didn’t know what they were going after,” comments



Steven L. Borns

### The fully restaged testimonial:

*Dynamo stages full-scale auditions to find real people who come across best, tapes their comments, then prepares a script for them based on excerpts from the tape. “I sort of felt like an actress,” said one Dynamo woman.*

SAG counsel David Alter. “It’s not bribery, it’s paying someone for performing a service. There’s no law or public policy they’re violating, they claim. But to be honest, they should disclose the number that hated Tide.”

Even if they did so disclose the negatives, the yes-no ratios are in practice padded. The networks and agencies have ostensibly agreed that 80 per cent of the people in a hidden-camera or otherwise prescreened commercial have to like the product for the commercial to be cleared for broadcast. But the figure is applied only to the pre-screened sample. In other words, if 200 shoppers were stopped in the supermarket and only 25 of them were users of the sponsor’s product, only 20 of these 25, not 160 of the original 200, must like the product for the commercial to go on the air. To take one recent example, BBDO handed New York casting agent Barbara Claman a computer print-out of all people in the greater metropolitan area who had purchased Black and Decker power tools the previous year, and had her telephone them for a commercial. Out of 250 known owners called, only 30 liked the product enough to

do a commercial, despite the chance to earn money. It was broadcast nonetheless.

Then there’s the man-in-the-street testimonial without any pre-screening, for which the acceptance ratio is supposed to be 51 per cent. In one example of this genre, announcer Robert King interviewed dog-walkers on the Boston Common. The scenario was: find a canned-dog-food user, challenge the skeptic to have his or her dog try Gainesburger on the spot and wait for the shock of conversion (“He’s eating!!!”) while the cameras roll 40 feet away inside two trucks. King says: “They don’t keep the statistics. We were there for three days, and sometimes we’d wait three hours for people who used canned dog food. You see the one thing that worked. It is valid in that the person you see is actually being honest and true.” Adds another interviewer: “The bulk of the answers in those things is indifference. People will say, ‘Oh, it’s all right.’”

Given the advantage of padded ratios, the outcome is further handicapped by the skills of the interviewer. “You get a high ratio by not picking up anybody who’s bustling off somewhere,”

says one interviewing veteran. “And by how you inflect the question, whether you smile or not. You can manipulate them in any direction you want. You want the residuals, too. You’ll do anything to get that which will make the commercial go.” Though the networks and the FTC prohibit cutting any interview responses out of sequence, a skilled interviewer can mentally pre-edit by re-wording questions to keep strong statements in sequence. “In an interview of that kind,” says Funt, “you’re getting a guy to repeat what you want him to say so often that you’re choosing the strongest statement, the most clear, the shortest, anything you want, and then omitting all the qualifying stuff. They’re lying within the commercial. If a person says one favorable word out of 10, you can make that single individual make a stronger point than he did in fact.”

Watch Arnold Lewin of Mar Vista, California, on TV and you see a man for a second and a half saying of Morningstar Farms sausages, “I think it’s terrific! I like it!” But to hear Lewin resurrect the shaved material off the cutting-room floor is another matter. “For 25 minutes the interviewer asked me over and over what I thought of the product, if I really liked it. He asked me so damn many times I was getting tired of it. I do like the product. Maybe it’s not the way to advertise it to say you finally get used to the taste, but in a way it’s true. You have to become accustomed to it.” Echoes Helene Bektesevic, an Ivory Snow “convert”: “I probably took longer than most people. I kept going back and forth between the piles. Of course they edited the length of time going back and forth.”

The networks don’t look at these out-takes before passing commercials for broadcast; they review only the final cut and an affidavit signed by the endorser that affirms the cuts are true to his total response.

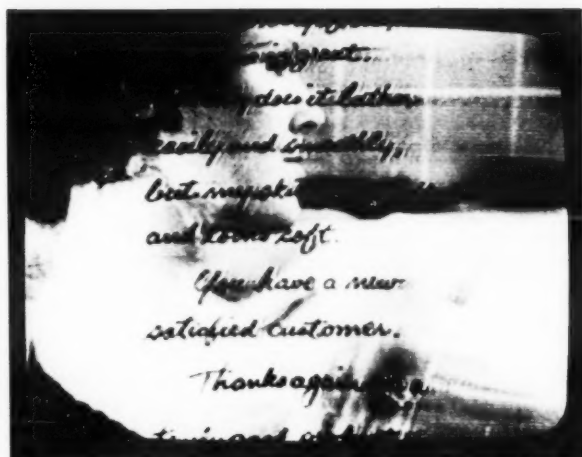
But this introduces a second wrinkle of monetary inducement. As John McGuire, SAG executive secretary, points out, "How reliable is an affidavit when a person knows he's going to get paid a certain amount of money?"

"Sure, if you reveal it's a commercial, they're going to sign the release because they're going to get paid," says EUE director Mickey Trenner. "We don't do it that way. We go back to the people, show them the transcript, get them to agree, notarize it, then show them the excerpt. Now you tell them it's a commercial. There's no fooling around. You could go to jail."

But Leonard Olds told me: "Right after the third interview they took me aside and told me it would be a considerable amount of money. Well, it paid for the swimming pool at my house—\$7,000." Helene Bektsevic says: "I had to go to the ad agency to see it and sign a release. At the time we went they said we'd be paid. Then we signed the release." And Mary Jane Sabino of Cleveland, a Dynamo endorser on TV, recalls, "At one time they said that if I were chosen I would stand to make a considerable amount of money in residuals."

Though it's not disclosed on your TV screen, real people are paid the same rates as Screen Actors Guild members: \$200 a session plus those mystique-ridden residuals, or re-play fees—which is where the money is. (With repeat playings in several markets, earnings can run into the thousands of dollars.) Though they don't have to join the union, they sign a SAG contract and are theoretically entitled to all membership perks. Naturally, actors see them as scabs.

"Enough has been published about the monetary rewards of doing commercials," insists SAG counsel David Alter. "Anyone who goes to the supermarket or watches TV understands that if you give the right answers,



Steven L. Borns

#### The unsolicited testimonial:

*Increasing viewer awareness of the potential rewards of becoming an "unsolicited" commercial endorser raises doubts about the heartfelt purity of some of them. One woman whose unsolicited letter to Tone soap resulted in a televised spot admits to being inspired by the success of the first Tone soap letter-writer and has ambitions for further unsolicited triumphs: "I've been thinking of writing to get some more money. But I've got a contract and I can't write to another soap company."*

you make money." One interviewer told me: "They know about residuals. They would invariably say off-camera, 'Is this going to run on television? Would I make much money?' One said, 'Is this going to run network?' They may be square, but they're not dumb." Allen Funt says: "There's this enormous desire of people to please an interviewer, to say what a guy hopes you will say, because somehow or other that helps him and in some more indirect way helps you. We've photographed people with cameras stuck down their throats and asked them if they notice a camera and they'll say no. We've shot taste tests with people trying to swallow horrible-tasting food because they think they might get paid for it."

The Federal Trade Commission, which has been cracking down on endorsement advertising the last few years, has of late proposed a guideline that would make it illegal to promise advance payment for testimonials. SAG is arguing to the FTC

that a mere tacit hipness to what's going on and the understood possibility of payment could color a testimonial. The affidavits the endorsers sign don't require them to answer whether they suspected they were being recorded. In order to have a case for prosecution, states FTC counsel Benjamin Fisherow, "we'd have to prove that the guy saw a mirror and realized there was a camera behind it."

Well, as Arnold Lewin tells it: "When I got through talking to the interviewer, he walked me over to a door which was in back of a mirror. I should have known something was going on. When they opened the door there were two or three cameras and somebody with a tape recorder." And Leonard Olds recalls both aural and visual tip-offs. "It was kind of funny—the interviewer's voice really changed with that kind of announcer thing: 'And this one, Mr. Olds, is your shampoo!' And he was at an odd angle behind the desk and so was the chair I was sitting in. I

started to move and he asked me not to. Well at that point I could have pointed and said, 'The camera's gotta be there.' And according to John Horvath of Eye-View, you can sometimes see hidden cameras for yourself on television: "If you look very carefully you can see a blind wall with the hole and a lens in it."

Hidden camera aside, the pertinent issue is, how can you be unsuspecting with an open camera? "I kind of figured it might be for TV, because there were so many cameras around, but I really didn't know for sure because of the way they explained it to me," says Michael Brennan. Helene Bektsevic adds, "When you see all the cameras you have some idea, but when they kept saying over and over again it was a market research program, I figured, what the heck, that's what it was."

It would seem, though, that the FTC could catch the agencies in *flagrante delicto* with the fully re-staged type of testimonial. Mary Jane Sabino of Cleveland, tells how it happens: "The first phone call was general questions. I was already using Dynamo. A couple of weeks later a woman called back and asked if she could ask me questions about Dynamo on a tape recording. She asked me a million questions and I got really tired of answering."

"I forgot all about it, and then a couple of weeks later an ad agency in New York called. They were coming to Cleveland and wanted to meet some women with the possibility of making a commercial. They made appointments with a lot of women to come to the Marriott Motel in Cleveland."

"There was a camera and tape recorder and you just talked about Dynamo all the time. It was sort of an audition. I mean, they were trying to see who would come across best, so you knew when you went there that they were going to look you over."

"I figured I was a reject, but two or three weeks later they called and said I was one of the women chosen. The script was everything I had said on the phone or in the interview. It was on tape. . . . They told me what it was I'd said before that they wanted me to say again. I sort of felt like an actress, but the director didn't say how to say it."

"The directing comes in with your trying to get them to be natural," says Nat Eisenberg, who directed Mary Jane Sabino. But one interviewer puts it in a different light. "One client said to me, 'She's saying it too slick. I want her to sound dumb.' You have to get the people to be less glossy. They talk in ad copy. On a floor wax spot, one woman said, 'Won't yellow floors.' She even dropped the pronoun." On the other hand, in the Cold Power com-

mercial with the farmer and his wife, the ad-makers did a little cosmetic re-touching in reverse. "We had an aluminum gate where you walk into the corral," says farmer's wife Delight Adams. "They built a wooden one for the commercial."

Like Sabino, Adams was market-researched by phone at her home (Oregon City, Oregon) and was then invited to play herself. In "reality" a little less rusticated than the sponsor would have you believe, Delight Adams speaks of the shoot with the trade savvy of an account executive. "They had layout sheets on what is done and what is said. Howard and I got paid residuals, the kids just the original fee. They have an option on the commercial for three years. When they pick it up, they pick it up in 13-week periods. Last year we made

\$15,000. I tried to get scale pay for the cows, but they wouldn't bite."

"When they put the film together, something happened to the soundtrack, and so Norman, Craig, and Kummel flew me back to New York to do a voice-over on it. They were here for over 12 hours. The hardest shot was on the back porch. The camera was on a dolly, and everything I said had to coordinate down to the last second with the camera, so much so that at one point I said I just had to change to Tide."

Howard and Delight Adams are both clean and famous. As is Marilyn Singine of Helenville, Wisconsin, whose letter endorsing Tone Soap appears on TV. "I had seen their first commercial. I tried the product and I liked it so much that I decided to write them. I had

no idea that it might become a commercial. But now I get calls from all over the country. People want to know if I really wrote the letter and how to make money on a commercial." She pauses. "I've been thinking of writing to another company to get some more money. But I've got a contract and I can't write to another soap company."

We decided to try doing our own testimonial on the testimonials. We asked two real people what they thought of the product that uses them. Fade in . . . Arnold Lewin: "If I had known it was TV commercial I probably would have gotten up and walked out." Delight Adams: "At first the way they had me doing it just didn't sound real. I told them I don't buy more things because of their rotten commercials. But Cold Power—I'd eat it at the price." ■

## PEPSI TAKES ON COKE

### The Cola War Heats Up As TV Taste Tests Flourish

Why not sell soda the way you sell soap?

BY SALLY HELGESEN

Something about the idea of taste tests has always fascinated the people at Pepsi. A former executive recalls that one of the "head games" the boys at Purchase—Pepsi's world-wide headquarters in New York—used to enjoy was blindfolding a new man and ordering him to drink his way through a wild assortment of fizzy beverages—things like grape and orange as well as colas—to see if he could distinguish the company product. After a while, of course, everything tastes the same, so most initiates fail the test. "I

guess it's their way of seeing if you have any balls," explains a marketing man who participated in one version of this bizarre *rite de passage*.

It was a combination of head games and balls that led Pepsi to declare war on Coke.

The now-famous Pepsi Challenge, a series of TV and radio commercials and print ads in which Pepsi boldly claims it tastes better than Coke and has the figures to prove people think so, first surfaced in April 1975. One bit of industry gossip claims the whole battle was started by a Dallas bottler disgusted by the sight of unsold bottles on local shelves. But a more comprehensive way to look at the war is as the triumph for

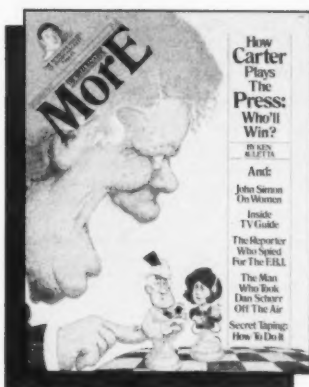
the packaging goods executives who came to Pepsi after 1969 and have brought a whole new ad strategy to the sale of soft drinks. What began as a local skirmish was so successful—Pepsi quickly doubled its market share from seven per cent to 14 per cent—that the big guns were brought in from Purchase and the challenge spread across the land. As it did, the formerly invincible "Big Red"—as it was discreetly referred to in Pepsi circles—leaped onto the field of battle with the kind of overkill tactics that so often characterize an imperial power challenged by a tough little guerilla fighter. Pepsi fired the opening salvo; since then it has called the shots.

The whys and wherefores of this first deadly thrust we can look at later. Suffice it for now to say that Pepsi had run a series of informal taste comparisons several years before in preparation for a short-lived national campaign, "Taste that beats the others cold, Pepsi pours it on." From these the company had learned that a majority of peo-

ple preferred a cold glass of Pepsi to one of Coke when making a blind choice.

It was in early 1975 that Pepsi decided to re-run a series of taste tests in Dallas, using not just anybody, but rather people who usually bought Coke. MPI, a market research group, was hired, booths were set up at shopping malls, Coke and Pepsi poured into unidentified containers behind elaborate screens and consumers asked to sip each product amid frequent mouth rinsings with warmish water. The testers were all Coke fans. "We screened them out by questions designed to identify which of your carbonated beverages they prefer *per se*," explains Ed Cohen, an MPI senior vice-president and intelligence commander in the Pepsi attack. Results showed Pepsi preferred 49 per cent to 42 per cent, thus enabling the company to film "re-creations" of the tests and invite local viewers to take the test themselves and decide. The commercials were unusual because they mentioned Coca Cola by name.

Sally Helgesen is a columnist for New Dawn and Harper's Bookletter.



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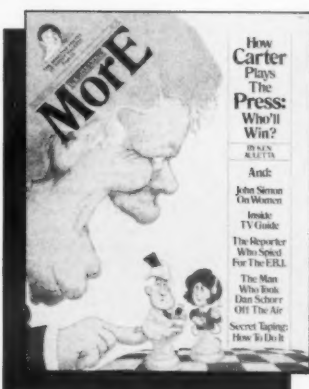
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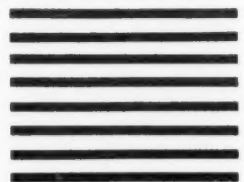
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Coke took the challenge as a declaration of war, and in the words of an executive, "We decided to teach Pepsi a lesson." In so doing, the company violated a standard bit of advertising wisdom: when you're number one, you don't even acknowledge the competition. "The account people at Pepsi must have felt like we did when Hertz actually responded to Avis. We couldn't believe our luck," says Toni Pagano, who was a copywriter with Doyle Dane Bernbach, Avis's agency, at the time. Coke conscripted a whole host of "creatives"—from McCann-Erickson, which has had the Coke account from forever, and from Marshall, which picks up affiliates like Tab and Fresca—to launch the counter-attack, which proved to be random, various and at times incoherent, a staggering Goliath blindly hurling badly-aimed boulders in the general direction of a nimble David. It was a little like sending in B-52's to deal with brush fires.

There were three stages in the Coke counter-offensive:

- Coke claimed that the "M" and "Q" designations on the plastic glasses being sipped by consumers were biased: after all, "M" stands for Mother and "Q" stands for Queer and lots of other unpleasant things, and the commercials in Dallas featured Pepsi in glasses bearing the preferred letter. Pepsi replied that no letters were used in the data-gathering tests on which their claims were based, but merely in the simulated tests shown on TV. It was only done to avoid viewer confusion between right and left hands. Even so, the company agreed to switch, and began running commercials featuring "L" and "S." Coke still wasn't happy, and they have since pointed out rather petulantly that "L" stands for Liberty and Lunch, and all those things that really make our country great, whereas "S" stands for... it really doesn't stand for

any of those things."

- Coke ran a flurry of local spots showing Coke drinkers picking Coke as their favorite where both products were clearly identified. The tagline: Coke outsells Pepsi in Dallas. "Like we really needed them to tell us that," says a Pepsi account executive at BBDO, the agency that Pepsi has used forever. "We already knew they outsold us."

- Coke boldly launched an incoherent, apples-to-oranges national campaign comparing Fresca, a lemon-lime drink, with Pepsi. This taste test showed that "one-third of the participants preferred Fresca." What this meant, of course, was that two-thirds liked Pepsi better.

The result of bombing brush fires is of course conflagration. The Pepsi Challenge became famous as the clumsy responses from Coke supplied them with a lot of free publicity. In May 1976 the challenge spread to San Antonio and Corpus Christi, and then north to Michigan.

At this point Coke attempted to outflank the enemy by summoning one-calorie Tab into the fray, hawking it as "lighter than light," a direct reference to Pepsi Light.

While thus scattering its shot in every direction, Coke picked the very month of May 1976 to introduce its new "thematic," the grand strategy that the company hoped would deflect attention from its increasingly far-afiel and oblique strafings. Amid great fanfare, "Coke adds life to..." was unveiled at a press conference held at Manhattan's Essex House. The mood was buoyant, as if the wolf were not at that very moment howling at the back door. Coke's John Georgas, a four-star general in the battle who has recently been shunted to a less strategic position in a messy aftermath of corporate reshufflings, announced that the new commercials would feature "young people involved with living and reaching for the sunshine"; they would be

shown "gathering together in fast-food restaurants, gas stations, airports," pleasant spots that "reflect their lifestyles." Hailed by all present was Bill Backer, the "genius" from McCann-Erickson who has been creative director for Coke since anyone can remember (successful copywriters are always called geniuses by their colleagues; it's the most over-used word in the business). Backer was there to introduce the optimistic little jingles he had done: "Boogie down, do the hustle looking fine/Coke Adds Life," and "Burgers, Chicken, Tacos or Fish/Soup or Sandwich, what do you wish? Coke Adds Life."

New Yorkers, and consumers in some of the other Pepsi Challenge markets, however, have missed out on the invitation to "boogie down" with Coke, because the new "thematic" has been pre-empted by the most bizarre strikes yet against the Pepsi Challenge, a series of confusing spots that claim



**The Pepsi Challenge Round Two:** Coke complained that Pepsi used sneaky tactics in Round One by labeling Pepsi "M" and Coke "Q"—a letter with unsavory associations, Coke claimed. Pepsi switched to "L" and "S." Coke then found reason to object to being labeled "S," so Pepsi switched labels for this test.

that "one sip is not enough."

Rick Johnston, the McCann copywriter who did most of these commercials, admits "it's fair to say" that their point is to ridicule Pepsi into withdrawing the challenge. "We want to show how silly it is to compare colas just on sips, or just on taste," he explains. When you think about it, it's hard to decide what criteria could be more to the point than "just taste," but let's not get into that. The whole idea is supposedly parodied, for example, by a spot in which a woman explains that her spirits, particularly "Milo, the one in the gladiator suit," always choose Coke in taste tests. In another "one-sip" spot, the consumer decides he really prefers the taste of tennis balls to anything. Johnston says this one was conceived on location. "I was writing scripts while we were shooting, and someone said they wanted to leave to play tennis, so I grabbed their ball and stuck it in a glass. We fooled around with that and decided to put it in." Whether or not such absurdities hurt Coke's image, Johnston says he wouldn't want to say.

Image is something Coke has always known about. Take "It's The Real Thing," a phenomenal success, deemed by a panel of ad pros "the most inspirational" campaign in history. This was image advertising's finest hour. Why then, one might ask, would Coke scrap it all in favor of the lackluster "Coke Adds Life"? For doesn't the new theme suggest a certain limp sopppiness, a basic lack of vitality within the consumer? Doesn't the new campaign suggest a lack of confidence within the company itself?

Perhaps catching Coke in the midst of an image crisis was Pepsi's luckiest break of all, for if Coke had stuck by its lofty claim to authenticity, it might not have been distracted enough to descend into the fray. "In my opinion 'The Real Thing' was the most perfect image ever de-

veloped, and Coke should have stayed with it for good," says a former top-ranking Pepsi executive, citing the Marlboro Man and Jolly Green Giant as examples of "permanent brand personalities." This same executive—let's call him Mr. P—also thinks that Pepsi's taste tests are a big mistake because "you can't sell colas on product differences because there aren't any substantial ones. You can only sell on image. Colas, airlines and travel destinations are the ideal products for image advertising because the sky's the limit. Any package-goods guy who tries to fuck with it doesn't know what he's doing."

In the early 70's, the package-goods guys arrived at Pepsi, a wave of men who had earned their stripes at companies associated with the Procter & Gamble philosophy of advertising. Bill Korn came from P&G, where he was a brand manager (toilet goods); Andral Pearson left the McKinsey Company, a consulting firm that does market research for P&G (a fascination with market research is a hallmark of P&G-ism) to become board chairman Donald Kendall's right-hand man; Victor Bonome came from the Maxwell House account at General Foods (a P&G practitioner) to become president of the Pepsi Cola company. With them these men brought a commitment to finding the "Unique Selling Proposition."

And how does one find the unique selling proposition? Toni Pagano, the former DDB copywriter, enjoyed success writing for Lever Brothers, and she explains the P&G technique with great admiration. Slowly she picks up the salt shaker from the table of the restaurant where we are eating and turns it over and over in her hands. "Why is this salt shaker different from all other salt shakers?" she ponders, examining it in detail much as a method actor would mull over his character.

Although nothing unique about the salt shaker appeared to my untrained eyes, advocates of the USP would spend years turning that salt shaker over and over, and would have found something special about it. Image admen, on the other hand, would have used the shaker as a take-off point for emotional appeal, young people dashing over mountains while tossing the shaker back and forth—"you've got a lot to shake." Such flights of creativity, such evidence of advertising genius, do not sit well with the USP guys, who just want the facts. "A lot of creative people don't like the USP because it's so restrictive, and because it involves a smaller budget. No boondoggles, you know. You can't go to a mountain in France to shoot the commercials," explains Pagano. "But clients are becoming more conservative these days. P&G teaches you to look at what's different about a product and sell it on that. This is what the Pepsi taste test is doing."

The package-goods guys arrived at an opportune moment, just as Pepsi was losing confidence in the very image that had brought its greatest success. The 60's had been the Golden Age of Image, with products of every kind making emotion-based appeals to the youth market. But as the once-bright decade drew to its tarnished close, winds of pessimism chilled the air. A pivotal moment came in 1969 when William Munro, then vice president of Pepsi marketing, sent up his woeful plaint: "Overnight those tanned, frolicsome, happy-go-lucky people of the Pepsi generation became advertising anachronisms. They became square to the very people we were aiming at. We weren't relevant any more. We had nothing more profound to say than 'Drink Up, America.'"

Of course the package-goods guys thought they had a lot more to say than "Drink Up, America," and soon they

introduced a new campaign based on what they took to be USP: "Taste that beats the others cold, Pepsi pours it on." The selling point here was market research that showed people preferred Pepsi when it was cold, but the point can hardly be said to hit you over the head, mentioned as it is only as part of an innocuous jingle. The campaign was a flop, and Pepsi reverted to selling image and emotion with "You've got a lot to live." Package-goods philosophy wasn't being bought by the old guard, who remembered the success of the great Pepsi Generation days, and its advocates weren't getting their way without a fight. One top-ranking exec who left during the rise of the P&G faction found the new concept disgusting. "They took a wonderful product image and reduced it like they were advertising soap with some crappy secret formula. They forget that image was what had taken Pepsi out of the minor leagues."

But in Dallas the new breed made their point. After its first big success, the Pepsi challenge spread to 20 selected markets, leaving Coke in an uproar. As Pepsi goes into a holding pattern, leaving behind little fortresses of renewed strength in challenge cities and preparing a national image "thematic" to consolidate strength with a parallel attack, Coke is left on the windswept field of battle with its forces scattered and martial confidence shaken. Management recently went through a major shakeup in which Georgas, fair-haired boy at the "Coke Adds Life" press conference, and Don Keough, the president of the company, were, in the words of one observer, "kicked upstairs." From their shell-shocked headquarters in Atlanta, a city synonymous with military defeat, the new generals will survey the lay of the land and try to patch up the cracks in the once-proud image of Big Red. ■

# REELING FROM SWAMP GAS

## Film Critics Review Film Critics Reviewing Film Critics

### Do they still go to the movies?

BY JOHN LEONARD

"Romper Room" lives. Robert Brustein on Pauline Kael in *The New York Times Book Review*, April 4, 1976:

She is also capable, at her worst, of Hollywood groupie gush . . . It is disturbing to see her wasting elaborate descriptive resources in comparing a stiff like Cybil Shepherd with her zombie predecessor, Gloria Grahame . . . her own capacity for popcorn escapism may explain how she can write at length on such forgettable items . . . For her writing is becoming larded with hyperbole . . . her enthusiasm is just beginning to fade into press agency . . . she has, willy-nilly, become a cog in the marketing mechanism of the very system she deplors.

Richard Gilman on Pauline Kael in *The Village Voice*, June 7, 1976:

what she so often practices now, setting the lead for her fellows, is an amalgam of idiosyncratic opinion, stargazing, myth-mongering, politics, sociological punditry, and intervention as a kind of co-worker in the medium. . . . The switch in terminology [from "films" to "movies"] strikes me as a sign of her movement toward the popular but also as a tactic in her new ambition to be popular herself. . . . her appalling new amorosness toward performers and the appalling

language of its declaration . . . the scandalous apotheosis of Nashville before it was finished . . . apocalyptic phase . . . dislike of Art . . . recent aberrations. . . .

Andrew Sarris on Pauline Kael in *The Village Voice*, June 21, 1976:

A large part of Miss Kael's popularity can be attributed to her sniffing suspiciously at aesthetic formulations of any kind. . . . For her part, Miss Kael studiously cultivated all the members of the nonfilm cultural establishment in New York, and she was amply rewarded for her efforts. . . . As the lapdog of the literati she could be counted on to bark on cue at all the horrors of Hollywood.

On the other hand, there's Andrew Sarris on Richard Gilman and Robert Brustein in *The Village Voice*, also June 21:

One of Gilman's less endearing traits as a literary infighter is his desire to throw stinkbombs at his enemies in their own backyards. . . . Mr. Gilman and Mr. Brustein have been peddling their produce at this stand for a long time. Why were they ever taken in by Miss Kael? . . . Even now Gilman seems to be using Miss Kael's alleged lapse from grace as an excuse to discredit all film criticism. . . . Gilman is being ungrateful to a critic who devoted much of her career to the discrediting of film history as an academic subject.

And Richard Gilman on

Andrew Sarris in *The Village Voice*, July 5:

. . . strange, jittery, buckshot assault. . . . I hadn't reckoned on the fury of a critic scorned, a paranoid one at that. . . . the savage defense of one's staked-out position and of one's standing in the community that people like Sarris are so frantically engaged in. . . . Well, when paranoia grips you, as seems to happen to film critics more frequently than to ordinary citizens, rationality and aplomb are scarcely your strongest suits.

To which Sarris, in the same issue, replies:

Gilman's writings have often reminded me of the late George Orwell's cryptic reference to "the big cannibal critics that lurk in the deeper waters of American quarterly reviews" . . . particularly fatuous . . . determined indifference . . . sneers. . . .

My, my. Where, one wonders, was John Simon when all this swamp gas escaped?

That the Yale Drama School, where Robert Brustein and Richard Gilman live, should have declared war on Pauline Kael on the occasion of her fifth book, *Reeling*, does not surprise. Dean Brustein is on record (in *The Culture Watch*) as believing that "the minority culture of art and experiment is in serious danger of being overwhelmed by the majority culture of profit and entertainment," one sign of which danger is that too many of his talented students graduate from non-profit theater to Hollywood or "some silly television series." Thus, while it might have been all right for Pauline Kael to stomp on *The Sound of Music*, when she starts promoting movies like *The Godfather II*, *Deliverance*, *Mean Streets*, *Shampoo* and *Thieves Like Us*, Brustein and Gilman must take action.

Admittedly, Brustein seems to have enjoyed most

of the same movies Kael did: he objects more to the extravagance of her enthusiasm and to what he perceives as her new coziness with the industry she's supposed to be criticizing. Whereas Gilman, while also deploring her tendency to gush and her "working relationship with the commercial and a dutifulness (when it isn't a tropism) toward the popular," cannot abide the movies she likes:

. . . all these movies are characterized by pretentiousness, unoriginality, predictability, and intellectual vacuity . . . . They're all exemplary products of a new, or renewed, American genre of unblinking "realism," with a modish, undigested component of "myth."

As Sarris says, Gilman has been here before. The last time around, in *The Confusion of Realms*, it was realistic fiction he disdained. He had no use for characters, except as "pretexts, arenas for inquiry," and no use for narrative, "that element of fiction which coerces and degrades it into being a mere alternative to life." He wanted fiction "stripped of its burden of 'information,' of portraiture and sense of actuality: denuded in this way, it can begin to be . . . more purely verbal artifact and imaginative increment." Now he wants the same thing from movies—not "fidelity to the various surfaces of the world" or "busy physicality," but "imaginative accession."

Such accessions range for Gilman from *Omensetter's Luck* ("the most important work of fiction by an American in this literary generation") to *Claire's Knee* ("more revelatory of desire and passion than any film I know"). Aha: extravagant enthusiasm. But then Brustein himself is no stranger to blurp-writing. Of Barbara Garson's play *MacBird*, he had said:

. . . the crucial event in opening up our stage . . . a singular act of courage . . .

John Leonard is the chief cultural correspondent of *The New York Times*.

Fred McDarrah



**Perils of Pauline:** After her book came out, Pauline Kael (left) was attacked by Richard Gilman (second from left) and Robert Brustein (second from right), and defended (sort of) by Andrew Sarris, who thought Gilman was really attacking him.

a work without precedent ... a liberating event for American theater, as Dr. Strangelove had been for American film, Lenny Bruce for American comedy, and Catch-22 for American literature.

One gathers that it is still permissible at Yale to gush. Gilman, however, felt that *MacBird* severed "our lifelines—to the past, to our moral bases and the bases of our judgment, to our possibilities of acting." And if *Catch-22* liberated American literature, why is *Omensetter's Luck* the most important work of fiction by an American in this literary generation? One also gathers that there's still academic freedom at the Yale Drama School, even if the courtesy isn't extended to the outside world. Brustein and Gilman do agree that there's something "erotic" about the titles of Kael's books—*I Lost It At the Movies*, *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, *Going Steady*, *Deeper Into Movies and Reeling*. One does not imagine this will come as a shock to Pauline Kael.

Andrew Sarris has other fishinesses to fry. For one, Gilman gave a book of his a

bad review in, naturally, *The Village Voice*, a backyard stinkbomb, while, at approximately the same time, he was giving a book of Gilman's a bad review in, inevitably, the *Times Book Review*. For another, Kael had been poking fun at Sarris in particular and *auteur* critics in general ("with their narcissistic male fantasies") for quite a while until she got to *The New Yorker*. For a third, Sarris felt that Gilman's review of Kael was a disguised attack on Sarris. (Says Gilman: "Sarris is correct in assuming that I was making an unstated reference to him.")

Are you bored? Well, you should be. Is this important? Perhaps.

Sarris cares as passionately about movies as Kael does. It isn't his fault that he doesn't write as well as she does. Most of us can't, including me, Gilman and Brustein. But he trafficks uneasily with the academy, having himself perpetrated a textbook and done time teaching at Columbia: "film history as an academic subject" is one of his backyards, and he finds it hard to sleep at night while Drama School Yalies knock over the garbage cans with their high

culture. As Terry Sanford runs for the Presidency, as other men run to the bathroom, Sarris runs into sneers. He seems to need to always counter-punch.

To be personal, since everybody else has been: I'm acquainted with Sarris, and was in fact responsible for his reviewing one of Gilman's books for the *Times*. He is amiable, rational and no more paranoid than any other cultural journalist who makes his or her living spinning opinions out of the emotional bowels by deadline. I'm also acquainted with Gilman, who is in no way a cannibal critic, has never in his life been fatuous and wouldn't know how to be indifferent. And Kael was around in my life, or I was around in hers, as long ago as 1961 in Berkeley, California, when I was a program director for the Pacifica radio station, KPFA, and she was our movie critic.

Brustein, Gilman and Sarris are just lucky that Kael declines to respond to them, at least in print. It was not always so. She quit Pacifica on the air, attacking me and the liberal pieties of the station and the fact that she wasn't

being paid: "After a million words for love," she said, "I'm going to start doing it for money." In 1961 and 1962, she devoured critics and professors and program directors for breakfast. Snap, crackle and pop: our vertebrae. Trotsky would have loved her. We did, anyhow, even though we didn't pay her. We didn't pay anyone.

And she hasn't changed, except for having given up badmouthing other critics. Berkeley was her Badlands, as anywhere west of the Hudson was Badlands for a critic: no weekly pillbox from which to spray the infidels with dum-dums, no cocktail parties at which to advance one's career by pogo stick. But the same democratic sassiness was there, the rabbit punch. On the prowl for freshness, style, beauty, audacity, discovery, craziness, "the subversive gesture," she has always believed that movies are "a bastard, cross-fertilized super-art."

Art, she said, "is the greatest game, the supreme entertainment, because you discover the game as you play it." (This, 14 years before Gilman would reproach her for not subscribing to a dic-

tum of Robbe-Grillet's: "a writer writes a book in order to find out why he wanted to write it.") According to Kael, "They become clods who think they can turn into important artists by the simple expedient of not-being entertaining." She has always found more energy, excitement, originality and art in, say, *Gunga Din*, *Top Hat*, *The African Queen* and *The Manchurian Candidate* than in *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, *Last Year at Marienbad*, *La Notte*, the let's-come-dressed-as-the-sick-soul-of-Europe movies and anything committed by Torre Nilsson.

Such zest in her Berkeley period was combined with a flabbergasting memory of movies and the ability to generalize thereon: "I suppose that a miserable American movie musical like *Pal Joey* [admired by Godard] might look good in France because I can't think of a single good dance number performed by French dancers in a French movie." Or: "I don't think there has ever been a good kidnapping-for-ransom movie. I don't know why, any more than I know why when opera singers go into movies the baritones can act but the tenors can't." Brustein would probably consider this a waste of elaborate descriptive capacities: I consider it marvelous. One can, I do, disagree with Kael half the time, and yet never fail to learn from her.

She hasn't changed much in the last 15 years, although American movies have. Sarris realizes this, agreeing that she "certainly seems to have given blank checks to Altman, Scorsese, Peckinpah, Mazursky and de Palma." Has she, "however belatedly," become an *auteurist*? If so, says Sarris, who simply can't help himself, her picking and choosing among directors may "reflect her lack of humor about herself."

Really—or reelingly: three prose snits and two letters to the editor, and no imaginative

increment or accession whatsoever. Sarris knows, and Gilman and Brustein should be able to remember, how hard it is to stand naked with one's opinions in public week after week for years on end. But they have backs to bite before they sleep. Listen to their tone of voice: "groupie gush," "press agency" and "cog in the marketing mechanism" from Brustein; "her new ambition to be popular herself" from Gilman; "lapdog of the literati" from Sarris. And then they snarl at each other: "literary infighter," "paranoid," "cannibal critic." Is this fun? Not for long. What if their own personalities were to be reviewed the way they review Kael's? She is, after all and after a long time, successful, a celebrity. Two of her books have been analyzed on the front page of the *Times Book Review*. One of them won a National Book Award. Out of the envy hisses swamp gas. Besides, she's a woman. Give her the Mary McCarthy or the Susan Sontag treatment. Shut up, dear, your emotions are showing. Is this criticism? No.

It is tempting to prescribe a vow of silence for critics on the subject of other critics. Remember the artifact, for Proust's sake! Who cares about the dirty underwear you got mixed up at the same West Side laundromat where you go to rinse and shrink your charity? But it's a time of celebrity professors and celebrity critics, a time of imposing oneself on ungainly events, of substituting oneself for the event. Somebody else may have done whatever it is we decide to notice, but what has been done will be looked at through the blue filter of *us*, the reticular formations and smudgy psychic palm-prints of the clerks of culture. The media have become conscious of themselves as a class, and it often seems that's all they want to write about, and here am I, doing the same god-damned thing, and it's a waste of typewriter ribbon. ■

## LITERACY

# WORDS FAIL IN DIM DEBATES

## Candidates' Syntax Harder To Believe Than Their Promises

A guide to bread-and-butter illiteracy.

BY JOHN SIMON

I was watching the first two Ford-Carter debates for any lapses of literacy. In the event, one could not see the literacy from the lapses, so many of them that I shall not even try to list the more vulgar errors. Language was trampled underfoot by both candidates, yet even the most correct speech would have suffered from the delivery it received. Carter's pungent Georgian accent loses much of its penetrability north of the Mason-Dixon line, but at least establishes him as a man of the people. Ford's way of speaking has to do less with people than with robots: a mechanical murmur electronically amplified, and only an approximation of the human voice.

Ford's very looks and demeanor are a problem: were we, in fact, looking at a supposed replica of an earthling fabricated in the laboratory of some distant and not altogether accurately informed planet? The creature has all the requisite organs (at least the outer and visible ones), e.g., one nose, two ears, two lips, four jaws. The eyes are a bit rudimentary, and smiles, perhaps so as not to crack the facial construction, are seldom if ever at-

tempted, and never succeed. During the first debate, the robot was not programmed to look into the camera; for the second one, this was remedied. But the blank stare of those token eyes surrounded by such vastnesses of bone was discomfiting to watch. When the gaze was directed at Carter while the Georgian was speaking, those eyelets tended to contract further into pinpoints of murderous hatred, gruesome to behold.

Carter smiled profusely. It was a goony smile, rather like something a child might have carved into an ugly fruit or a puckered-up old quince. Yet it was a sign of life. What neither man had was a sign of style, except in his haberdashery, which was impeccably conservative and, as you looked from one man to the other, almost identical. The neckties, in fact, were more than conservative, almost reactionary. But above these eminently suitable suits and ties were the mouths, disbur-ing all that stylelessness, all that illiteracy.

There were sentences whose syntax was harder to believe than their political promises. Take Carter's: "I've been one who's loved my nation as many Americans do, and I believe that there's no limit placed on what we can be in the future, if we can harness the tremendous resources militarily, economically, and the stature of our

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people, the meaning of the Constitution in the future"—try to diagram that sentence!

But at least Carter gets lost in a longer, more woodsy sentence; Ford can lose his way in a terrace garden: "We have been successful in Portugal where a year ago it looked like there was a very great possibility that the Communists would take over in Portugal." Beyond the crude errors, such as *like* for *as*, or *hopefully* for "I hope," the most frequent faults were lapses into bureaucratese. In that awesome jargon, you don't say *use* when you can roll out a *utilize*, instead of "inadequate production," you say, as did Ford, "low utilization of our productive capacity." The idea is to make everything as abstract and, presumably, grand as possible, hence such Fordian phrases as "the lower end of the taxpayer area" or "the quality-of-life programs."

A particularly noxious aspect of bureaucratese is the yoking together of synonyms or near-synonyms, on the assumption that if you say the obvious twice, it becomes profound. Thus Ford gave us

"needed and necessary" (sometimes, even more mysteriously, "needed or necessary"), "adequately and effectively," "in all fairness and equity," "the opportunities and the possibilities" and, most moving of all, "I hope and trust." Carter, no slouch, responded with "our friends and allies," "obsolete and obsolescent" and "the poor and the destitute." Even a single word and its derivative can yield a lovely couple, and so we had Ford's "missiles we are now developing in research and development." And there are such key words of bureaucratese as *factor* that must be accorded high utilization even where their capacity is counterproductive, hence Carter's "an additional factor that needs to be done."

Let us have, however, a brief sampling of the basic, bread-and-butter illiteracy as well. Ford, for instance, has trouble with adverbs and verbal complements, and came a cropper both with "gone up substantial" and "spread itself too thinly." Carter, for example, stumbled as follows: "the inflation rate was because of excessive demand,"

"businesses who trade with Israel" and the total blithering of "the unemployment rate is extremely high, sometimes among minority groups, or they were black or young people—or forty per cent unemployment." Anacoluthon can be an effective device, but not the basic syntactical unit. No less imposing, though, was Ford's announcement that "we have an agreement [with the Russians] where they notify us and we notify them of any military maneuvers that are to be undertaken. . . . In both cases where they've done so, there is no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, and there never will be under a Ford Administration." That, surely, must be the ultimate in non sequitur, grammatical and logical.

When it came to boners, Carter was no match for Ford. But, then, who could equal "a few months ago—or, I should say, maybe two years ago . . ." and "eliminating ten million taxpayers in the last seven years"? Only slightly less delicious are "that the U.S. should sell, give, or otherwise transfer" and "the Soviet Union and

the like." And what about the classic purity of "America is at peace with freedom"? Carter, however, is the master of doubletalk: "I understand that the report today is accurate. Mr. Ford has said, I believe, that it was accurate, and that the White House made no attempt to block the issuing of that report. I don't know if that is exactly accurate or not. I understand that both the Secretary of the Department of State and the Defense Department have approved the accuracy of today's report, and also the National Security Agency. I don't know what was right, or what was wrong, or what was done. . . ."

Watching these men debate each other, one had a depressing vision of a battle of pygmies. Carter was slightly more intelligent, more believable, more human. But in such a contest of nonentities even the winner is a loser. Under the circumstances, it was provident for the ground rules to stipulate a different moderator for each debate. Anyone allowed to moderate all three encounters would have surely been elected president by a write-in vote ■

# MEET THE PRESS AT THE 5<sup>TH</sup> A.J. LIEBLING COUNTER-CONVENTION

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## SOURCES:

### What Hath Deep Throat Wrought? (10:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.)

How do you handle a source? Do you nurse him along, intimidate him, or both? When should a reporter go to jail to protect a source? What constitutes betrayal of a source? One of the hottest debates in journalism today, and it should be one of our hottest debates as well.

**Moderator:** Sam Roberts, chief political correspondent, *The New York Daily News*; co-author, *I Never Wanted To Be Vice President Of Anything*.

**Panelists:** Dan Dorfman, financial reporter, *New York* magazine, Nicholas Gage, investigative

reporter, *The New York Times*, Nat Hentoff, *The Village Voice*, Seymour Hersh, investigative reporter, *The New York Times*; author, *My Lai Four*, Jack Newfield, senior editor, *The Village Voice*.

## THE ART OF THE INTERVIEW: Cracking The Tough Nuts (10:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.)

How do you get a Southern Baptist to open up about the lust in his heart? Tape recorders and booze . . . when to use and when not to. Other tricks of the trade that can make the difference between a revelation and a waste of time. How the best interviewers interview.

**Moderator:** Richard Reeves, political columnist, *New York* magazine; author, *A Ford Not A Lincoln*.

**Panelists:** Nora Ephron, senior editor, *Esquire*; author, *Crazy Salad*, Barry Golson and Robert Scheer, *Playboy*, Dave Marash, WCBS-TV anchorman, Gabe Pressman, WNEW-TV newsman; host of "The Gabe Show."

## TELEVISION PROGRAMMING: Games TV Programmers Play (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Who's winning in the three-way battle for prime-time supremacy? Why? What makes them run what they run when they run it? Why do they marry Harry and Barbara while divorcing Joe and Rhoda? You'll see some shows that made it in '76, some that didn't, and why. These television and media wizards tell all.

**Moderator:** Jeff Greenfield, freelance writer and media consultant.

**Panelists:** Les Brown, radio and television reporter, *The New York Times*; author, *Television: The Business Behind The Box*, David Garth, president, David Garth Associates, Paul Klein, NBC-TV, vice president of programming, Bridget Potter, ABC-TV, director of prime-time development.

**GOSSIP:**  
**Private Parts Of Public People**  
(1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Is gossip journalism? Where does a reporter draw the line? Are there any secrets too awful to tell? Any people you shouldn't tell secrets about? How do professional gossips feel about what they do for a living? How do they keep their own private lives private? The best gossips give you the scoop. . . .

**Moderator:** James Brady, author, *Super Chic*.

**Panelists:** Nancy Collins, reporter, *Women's Wear Daily*; Midge Decter, senior editor, *Basic Books*; author, *Liberal Parents, Radical Children*. John Simon, columnist, *More*; film critic, *New York* magazine. Leo Lerman, *Vogue*. Liz Smith, columnist, *New York Daily News*.

**OBSCENITY ON THE RUN**  
(3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

What's hard-core and what's soft? Can pornography survive the new legal assault? Are some people giving porn a bad name? How can *Screw* be obscene in Kansas but not in New York? How do Larry Flynt and others get away with all that " . . . bleep"? Meet them all and decide for yourself.

**Moderator:** Brendan Gill, drama critic, *The New Yorker*.

**Panelists:** Larry Flynt and Bruce David, publishers, *Hustler*. Al Goldstein, editor and publisher, *Screw* magazine. Charles Rembar, attorney, Charles Rembar Associates. Gay Talese, author.

**PRIVATE EYES:**  
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# SCOTT MEREDITH RUNS THE LIT BIZ LIKE A CRAPS GAME

## Kissinger, Mailer, Exner, Agnew Seek Him Out For the Big Deal

### Turning celebs into writers and vice versa.

BY LINDA WOLFE

On July Fourth weekend this past summer, Scott Meredith was in Las Vegas shooting craps. He brought his wife and daughter with him and he was joined there by his son and daughter-in-law. All the Merediths got suites of their own and everything was on the house, as it always is in Vegas for resort regulars. There were flowers and fruit baskets and free booze for friends (Meredith himself never drinks) and without having to spend a cent, Meredith came home six days later with \$11,500. "I never lose," he told me. "I'm a pretty good literary agent. But I'm one hell of a craps shooter."

Back in New York that July, Meredith plunged into the literary craps game again, this time one of the riskiest tosses he'd ever made: the selling of a president's mistress, the auctioning-off of the oddly prissy memoirs of Judith Campbell Exner. But this time it looked as if his winning streak was in jeopardy. The word being dialed around the marketplace then as I started work on this piece was that Meredith had coolly turned away from a \$100,000 sure-thing because he was banking on something even bigger, but that the final winnings, which were negotiated late in July, were singularly shabby.

It was G.P. Putnam's that had offered \$100,000. That was last winter, when an outline of Exner's memoirs had been sent simultaneously to a sizeable and excited group of New York publishers. Then suddenly the auction was called off. Putnam's told Meredith it wanted to withdraw its offer. Meredith told Putnam's to think nothing of it, the money had been insufficient anyway. Reasoning that most of the publishers who had seen the outline were wary of buying a pig in a poke, Meredith had decided that if he held back and re-auctioned Exner once the book was actually written, the offers would go considerably higher than a niggling \$100,000 anyway. It takes one hell of a craps shooter to be so cool but Meredith's nerves are steel. So he teamed a writer with Exner—Ovid Demaris of *The Director* and *Dirty Business* fame—and he waited.

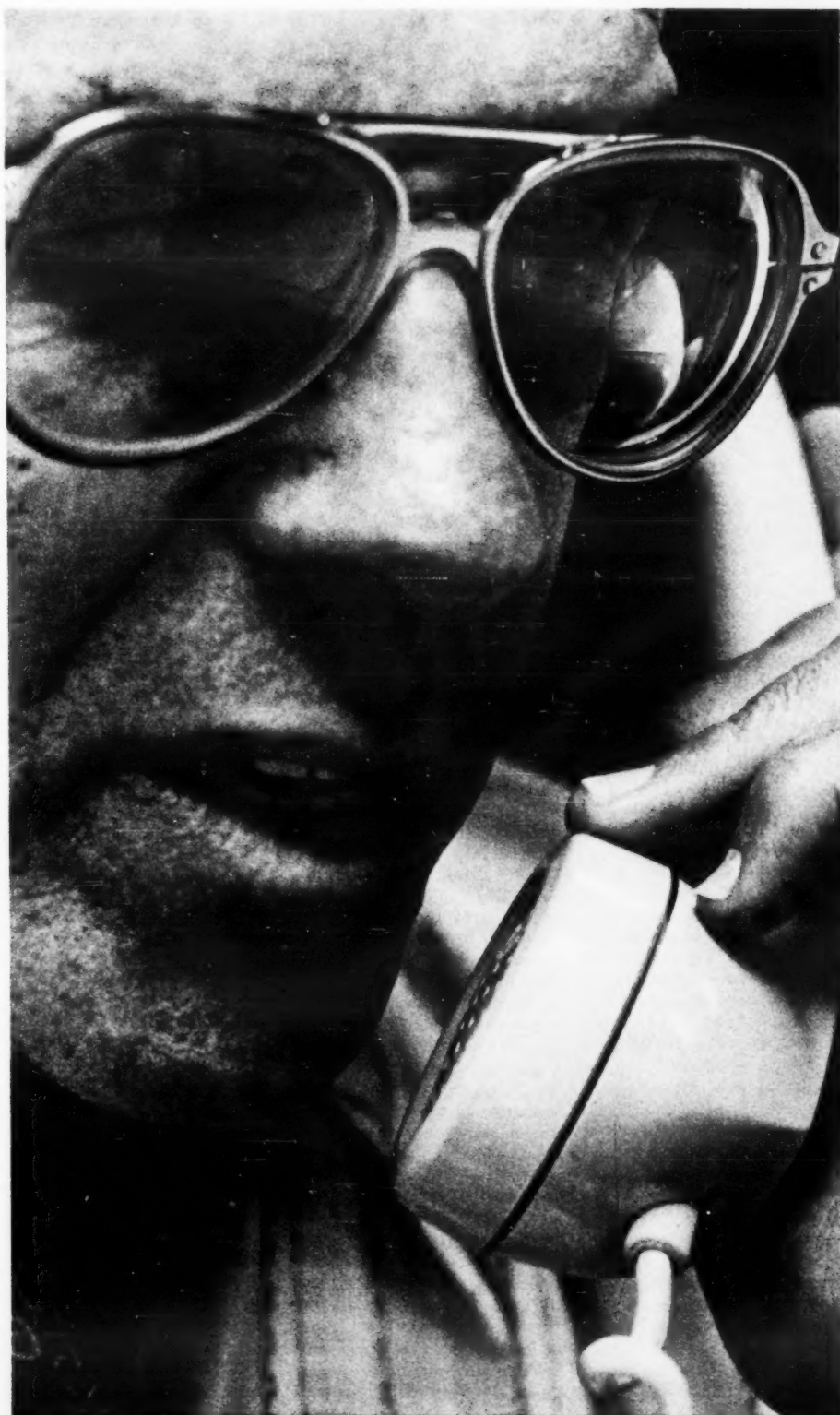
Finally, the book came in. But this time around there were even fewer would-be takers, and the gossip in town was that the prices being offered in July for the finished product were even lower than the late-winter prices for the poke. The big-money paperbound houses didn't even seem interested. Ballantine and Dell and Fawcett and Warner Books turned Exner

down, perhaps fearing legal or Mafia complications, and the hardbound houses, without paper publishing's support, are penurious. So at the end of the month, small Grove Press, allying itself with small Manor Books, made an offer and won the book. How much did they offer? No one wanted to be specific. Meredith said, "As you can imagine, it was a very substantial figure." Exner's lawyer was close-mouthed. Only Grove's Barney Rosset would give me a clue as to the actual figure. Rosset said, "By the time the book got to us they weren't even interested in money. Everyone had turned it down but Exner wanted the book published and Scott wanted to satisfy her. They'd have taken one dollar or \$50,000." For a craps shooter who had turned down \$100,000, the money Rosset was talking about sounded like a rare setback.

Meredith's detractors will undoubtedly enjoy this Exner story. They love any tales that contain even a breath of suggestion that the consummate literary wheeler-dealer may have been outfoxed. Partly that's because they don't encounter them very often. The man's star has been rising from the day he opened his first office 30 years ago, the stuffy walk-up so small that when he or his brother, who worked with him then and still does today, was called upon by a client, one of the Merediths had to get up and wait outside in the hall. Today Meredith makes \$300,000 a year after his East Side office overhead and even his detractors are willing to grant that he completely revolutionized the agenting business. He perhaps invented, but certainly perfected, the literary auction, thus creating economic warfare among publishers and huger and huger advances for writers. He grasped and ran with foreign rights, opening his own overseas subsidiaries at a time when many agents merely carelessly ripped open and forgot about the fragile blue envelopes that came once a fortnight from Europe. Meredith handled politicians and hookers and stage stars as if they were writers and he handled writers as if they were politicians and hookers and stage stars. And after a while he was even handling Norman Mailer. Today, not just his newsworthy clients but he himself is news. The footnote has become a headline.

All of this has not endeared Meredith to certain people in the publishing field. It wasn't so long ago that agents were viewed as servants by publishers and forced to enter the more dignified houses through the back door. Was it Conrad's or Hardy's agent who finally tricked a publisher into inviting him in through the front by delivering one of his

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Calvin Fentress

famous client's most suspenseful enticements minus its last two chapters? Later, all agents got to use the front door, but they made sure they retained the privilege by aligning themselves with their business adversaries, by being as gentlemanly and refined as the publishers themselves. Meredith took this tradition and twisted its neck, being argumentative, brash, an unpredictable and fierce negotiator. His fellow agents avoided him, hoping he would soon go away. But of course, he persisted, endured. Still, the old antipathy lingered. As Roger Straus of Farrar Straus says, "That agents' group that meets for lunch at the Four Seasons every month—the group with Willis Wing and Perry Knowlton and Paul Reynolds—they'd rather discover they had venereal disease than have Scott Meredith join them."

I, like so many people in publishing, encountered the Meredith myth long before I met the man. Everyone in publishing collects and tells Scott Meredith stories, and I was treated to tapefuls. Young editors in particular told resentful stories since Meredith is famous for bypassing young editors in favor of their bosses. Moreover, since he doesn't go to lunch, he doesn't get to mingle with and meet the newcomers. "He doesn't really exist," insisted one. "Or if he does, he's like the Wizard of Oz, given to effects but no real action." Another woman editor said, "He doesn't go to lunch because, you know, he's short and fat and he doesn't want anyone to see how ordinary he is."

But very few long-established editors are surprised by Meredith's tactics, and they tend to speak of him as "brilliant but difficult," "imaginative," "a challenge." Fellow agents are another matter.

Their confidences are loaded with innuendoes. One asserts that Meredith bribed Norman Mailer into becoming his

client. One insists that Meredith's name is a made-up one but when he cannot establish the true and authentic name after a half hour of phoning around, launches into an anti-semitic tirade against the cover-up being perpetrated by every New York agent with a non-ethnic moniker. Two others tell me my piece will never see print.

### The Court of King Midas

Our interview appointment is for three. I am a bit early and have time, in the Muzak-filled waiting room, to read the plasticized news clippings about Meredith that bedeck a countertop. The most interesting one mentions that he is to be the agent for Kissinger's memoirs, a union that came about because of a rumor to that effect, perhaps a self-fulfilling prophecy [see box]. Then, promptly, I am shown into Meredith's office, where I discover that he is taller and younger and thinner than my informants had led me to believe, a forceful-looking man with a just-greying, busy head of hair. He is wearing several gold rings, one of them the large carved face of a Scotsman ("For my name," he explains). He also sports a gold watch and bracelet and writes with a gold pen. I remember that Richard Curtis, a onetime assistant of Meredith and now an agent on his own, has described Meredith to me as a golden man, a sort of happy King Midas: "Whatever he brushes against seems to turn to money. But what's interesting is that it also seems to spread to anyone who brushes up against him. No one who has ever learned to do business from Meredith has ever come away losing money."

Meredith is apologetic. It isn't going to be a very exciting day. Nothing much is going on. His chief assistant, Jack Scovill, telephones to report that a novel by Hank Searles which had been taken by Norton after being turned down by Putnam's Walter

Minton has just been bought by the Literary Guild. Meredith says, "Remind me to call Walter and tweak his nose a little when this interview is over." And to me he explains: "I love this business. There are two big kicks. One is selling something for a person who's never sold before. And the other is selling something nobody wants."

He makes and answers some brief phone calls, then tells his assistants to hold the calls for a while so that we can talk. The phone, which doesn't ring anymore, keeps lighting up psychedelically. He is, of course, notorious for conducting business almost exclusively over phones, as opposed to over lunches.

Although Meredith is not taking calls while I am in his office, he is nevertheless engaged now in directing his assistants in theirs. (Later in the day I will call one of the assistants an agent; he will tell me: "No, I'm not really an agent. We're called editors here and work only on salary, not commission.") Meredith has 3,000 clients, 500 of whom are active, productive writers, and thus a volume of negotiations that probably exceeds that of any other agent.

Meredith's system is to have his six assistants hand him notes after every telephone call or letter transaction they receive. Then Meredith pencils in his instructions for the next step, the return call or letter. Thus, while I am there, a note informing Meredith that *Sports Illustrated* has just offered Garry Wills \$6,000 to do a piece on religion in sports is answered by Meredith, "Call Wills and let me know what he says." Another, which contains an offer from NBC's "Saturday Night Live" to have Norman Mailer guest-host the show with Chevy Chase for a fee of \$2,250 plus fringes is answered, "Norman will never agree. No way. Tell them no."

One note that turns up while we are talking says, "Remember to call Walter Minton on the Hank Searles/

Literary Guild." Just in case Meredith should forget to "tweak" Minton, his staff will see to it that he does. They not only do his bidding but remind him constantly what his biddings are.

Meredith, reading his notes and making his comments, is clearly relishing every slip of paper. He seems to enjoy deal-making whether the deal is for \$5,000 or \$50,000.

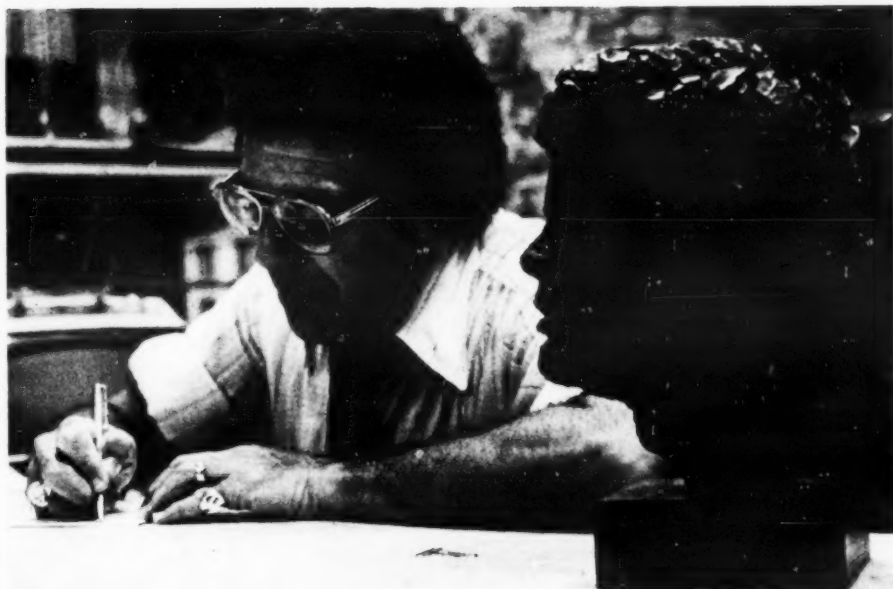
There is, in fact, an almost revivalist atmosphere in the office. Meredith is a high priest and his assistants his acolytes. Some people say the god they are worshipping is Mammon. Meredith says it's the muse. He respects, admires, wants to protect writers. "I don't even mind the anxious, nudgy ones. It's a nervous business, writing. It's so lonely. Just you and the typewriter and there's not much, really, you can do about how it comes out. I mean, it either comes out or it doesn't. You know." This doesn't come across to me as a pose, although certainly it is a self-serving as well as author-serving posture, since Meredith himself always gains when he pushes hard for his writers. Still, even a pose will tell us much about a man. Meredith wants to see himself as an adversary, the writers' David against the publishing Goliaths; many agents never even strike the pose.

He is, of course, a tough negotiator and at times seems to ride herd on his clients' own more gentle inclinations. He tells me, for example, about how he has just negotiated a deal for a new client, Dr. Carl Sagan. Sagan, before coming to Meredith, had promised to show his work first to Jim Silberman, late of Random House. When Meredith took over he called Silberman and said, "Sagan tells me he's promised to show you his work first. So we're going to do that. But we're also simultaneously going to four other people. You're getting it first, but not alone." When Silberman

objected, Meredith said, "Sure Carl made an agreement with you. But I didn't make the agreement. Carl's a damn fool. That's why he needed an agent." In the end Sagan's work—four projected books—ended up at Random House, but Silberman paid \$250,000 for them. "It was probably \$240,000 more than Sagan had anticipated," exults Meredith.

Later he explains, "Anyway, the publishers are used to me by now." He tells me about a deal he has closed this morning—a six-figure advance for Max Ehrlich's new novel, *The Cult*. "Ehrlich's last book, *The Reincarnation of Peter Proud*, earned over \$140,000 for Bantam in the paperbound edition alone. Now Bantam, which wanted to buy the new one and then arrange or have us arrange for a hardbound publisher, was offering \$25,000—only \$5,000 more than Ehrlich got for *Peter Proud*. I said, 'Forget it. We'll auction it.' They came back and said, 'Hold on. We'll make it fifty.' I got angry. I said, 'No. And now your next move is going to be that you'll offer me \$75,000. And you know that mine is going to be that I'm going to say no to that, too.'" Bantam came up with \$100,000. "Marc Jaffe of Bantam is one of the most brilliant editors in the business," says Meredith. "And one of the things that is perhaps a big part of his brilliance is that he always keeps trying to make the deal go his way." He seems to be speaking about himself as well as Jaffe.

While we are talking big numbers, Meredith gets word of the other kind of kick he most enjoys, the selling-someone-who-hasn't-sold-before variety. A note comes in saying, "We've just gotten a \$5,000 advance for a guy who sent his manuscript in to our fee-reading service." Meredith shows me the note. "This guy sent us this Biblical novel. We rejected it. Our readers didn't like it too much. But shortly after it



**Sentiment:** Meredith keeps a bust of JFK prominently displayed in his office, but professed admiration for the late President did not prevent him from hustling the memoirs of self-proclaimed JFK mistress Judith Campbell Exner.

Calvin Fentress

went back we happened to negotiate a \$350,000 deal on a new Taylor Caldwell. It was a Biblical novel. And then we started to think that what with Carter and all maybe this was a good time for Biblical novels. How good does a Biblical novel have to be, anyway? So we got the manuscript back from this guy, and now Jack tells me we've sold it." The book, I see, on the note, is *The Quest* and it's by a writer from Georgia whose name I can't quite make out. Meredith is beaming.

Nothing irks Meredith's fellow agents more than his fee-reading operation. He charges \$50 for a short story or article, \$100 for a novel or non-fiction work under 150,000 words and \$150 for books longer than that. In return, the writer is guaranteed a reading and a detailed commentary on the good and the bad within. No one knows how many such submissions Meredith, who advertises the service, gets a year, but some observers speculate that they are so many—and so profitable—that fee-readings account for a major portion of

the agency's income. Fee-reading is not considered quite respectable by most agents; the prestigious Society of Author's Representatives frowns on it. The argument against it is that the point of fee-reading is never to find or develop writers but merely to offer just enough sugary pap in the rejection notices to keep suckers re-submitting.

Last year an ex-fee-reader wrote a detailed description of how the operation worked at the Scott Meredith agency that seemed to confirm the critics' worst expectations. Les Ericson in *The Village Voice* described the manuscripts he was given as the work of "dullards out there who were deluding themselves into thinking a) that they could write (in fact most of them would be better off repairing dildos or emceeing game shows) and b) that anybody was really listening to them." Ericson felt that "it's technically possible that a manuscript will be good enough to market. But . . . our priority was repeat performance. In every evaluation the author (no matter how

bad) is coaxed into sending another miscarriage the agency's way."

As Meredith spoke about the Biblical novel I remembered Ericson's piece and, curious about the kind of person who submits to a fee-reading service, I squinted and copied down the name of the writer and his city. R.C. De La Motte, Augusta, Georgia. Several days later I reached him through information. When I did, I learned that no one at Meredith's had as yet notified him that *The Quest* had been sold, so first I had to tell him. He was shy, then jubilant. A teacher of Bible classes in a small black religious school, De La Motte had once written a novel that was published by the Dollar Book Club and sold 300,000 copies but, he said sadly, "That was years ago and for the past 10 years I've been receiving nothing but rejection slips." Then he insisted that what he was now going to say had nothing to do with his being beclouded by the sudden blinding joy of the news I'd brought. No, this was something that he had often

said to himself once he started sending his stuff to Meredith: "Whatever he charges, Meredith is worth it. Where else could a person like myself go to get a manuscript read and commented on? When I send stuff to the publishing houses they send it right back with printed notes, 'Sorry. Not suited to our present needs.' Or worse, they don't send it right back but wait a year before they do. Well, I don't fault them. They're busy. You know how publishers are."

### Up From Wodehouse

Meredith moved from talking about current events to reminiscing about his past. He had begun his literary career as a writer at the age of eight. By 14 he was publishing, delivering his pulp comic and confession stories by foot in order to save carfare. By 22, and just out of the World War II army, he had had enough experience with writing to decide that while he liked it, he wanted to do something else for a living. (Meredith still writes, has published a fiction primer and a biography of George S. Kaufman and is working now on a third book, a biography of Louis B. Mayer, for which his agency has negotiated an advance he would not disclose from Simon & Schuster.)

While he was casting about for a future, a friend suggested literary-agenting. Meredith says he laughed and told his friend, "I'd rather be Adolph Hitler!" All the agents he had known in his already lengthy writing career had been junk agents ("Who else but a 'junk agent' would handle the junk I was writing?") and he had often had to sweat out getting his money from them until months after publishers had sent checks. Still, Meredith did take his friend's advice and he and his brother Sidney, with \$400 between them, opened their first office, the tiny, airless walk-up, but Meredith says he

made the decision only after swearing to himself that he would be altogether different from the agents he had known. Several of his special procedures date back to those early days, among them his policy of always paying writers the same day he receives publishers' checks for them.

It was hard to get clients in those days. Meredith used fee-readers from the beginning, and he also trained his fee-readers to write for him. Sometimes he'd get a commission from a pulp magazine and he'd agree to supply the issue with its entire table of contents; then he himself or some of his hired hands would stay up all night and churn out the issue, using a clutter of pseudonyms.

All of this was dreary. But there was one bright spot. By the end of Meredith's first year in business he had gotten his first "name" client: P.G. Wodehouse. Wodehouse and Meredith had been corresponding for years, ever since the teenage Meredith had published a short humor piece that had been, he says, "a shameless imitation of Wodehouse." The piece had come to Wodehouse's attention and the old man had written the young man a fan letter. They stayed in touch even during the war when Wodehouse, living then in France, was imprisoned by the Germans. Meredith sent him food packages. After the war Wodehouse was in disfavor for having made, while a prisoner, some apolitical broadcasts under German auspices, and although his name was cleared by Sir Anthony Eden in England, many people in publishing viewed him as an untouchable. He came to the United States to write and when his agent, Paul Reynolds Sr., died, Wodehouse sent some new work to Harold Ober. But Ober wrote Wodehouse a harsh letter, saying the stories were hopeless and the writer a has-been. "Ober was a sweet gentle grandfatherly man who grew roses," Meredith ex-

plains. "Maybe he was just in a foul mood that day. Anyway, Wodehouse was shattered, came to me for consolation, became my client and went on to write many of his Jeeves stories."

One name led to another and by the early 50's Meredith's agency was well-established. But it was more than accumulation of names that built his success: one bit of Meredith apocrypha credits him with the invention of the literary auction. Those who deny that he invented the practice do assert that he became its perfecter and its most successful manufacturer, the Henry Ford of the new, highly-charged agenting vehicle.

Many of Meredith's clients in those early days became top science-fiction writers, among them Arthur C. Clarke, Theodore Sturgeon and Lester Del Ray. Today Meredith still lays claim to these writers and to a pleasing array of others like Henry Miller, Jessica Mitford, Mickey Spillane and Ed Bullins. But the prize of his collection is Norman Mailer.

Meredith had had his heart set on Mailer for years before he actually succeeded in obtaining him. Curiously, when he did, it was because of an unsuccessful rather than a successful negotiation. This occurred in the mid-1950's when Meredith approached Mailer with a one-idea-only deal, the suggestion that he try to market some Mailer stories in a big-paying, short-lived magazine called *Fiction Parade*. Mailer was selling his stories to quarterlies then and Meredith remembers that he was skeptical about the deal; he was on his way to a baseball game and impatient and doubtful in excess. Mailer—to whom I spoke later—remembers that Meredith's plan failed but that it was precisely because of the failure that some years later he decided to become Meredith's regular client. "I liked the guy's candor," Mailer said. "His assessment of himself. The way

he explained how and why he had misjudged just how much he could do."

When Mailer and Meredith did actually team up, there were no more misjudgments or market failures. Meredith negotiated the contract for Mailer's *The American Dream* and then made a movie sale on the basis of a few chapters. It was the first big money Mailer had had in years. Henry Morrison, an agent who worked for Meredith at that time, recalls that his boss was practically demonic about getting the movie contract signed. "He drove up with it to Provincetown in a raging storm, got Norman to sign, then drove right back down in the same storm. Anyone else would have waited out the storm. Or at least taken a train. But it's part of Meredith's self-image that he gets things done on the spot. And besides, he was worried that if there was any delay, Warner Brothers might back down." Two years ago, of course, Meredith was similarly hard-driving in negotiating his historic \$1 million-contract with Little Brown for the novel Mailer is now working on.

### Heads He Wins, Tails He Wins

For all his reputation for mere flash and conmanship, I could easily picture Meredith as a Fortune 500 executive—in any other field besides publishing his figure would not be shrouded in the layers of backbiting and tale-telling I had encountered. But there is a collective image in publishing that makes the industry view itself as not quite a business, as a handmaiden to art or communication and thus somehow more or less than a business. Everyone who works in the field knows this isn't so, but few people are willing to say so.

Meredith, of course, does say so. Constantly. His memories were peppered with references to what things cost: the rent at the walk-up; the

salaries he had to pay; the prices of the little exquisite Netsuke carvings that have become his hobby; his winnings and losses at Vegas and over the telephone. To the extent that money is viewed as vulgar, Meredith had said vulgar and unmentionable things. But to the extent that one credits that money is what makes even art and communication go round, Meredith had simply been straight.

I was to understand this better as I began seeking clues to his character by interviewing those who know him really well. Mailer says that what he likes best about Meredith is that "there are no distortions in the way he sees the world. He's a marvelous realist. Hemingway once wrote that every writer—and I'll amend this to make it every man—ought to have a built-in shit detector. Scott's one of the few people who really has one." It was what I had felt. Later I discovered that many others—and not just those who, like Mailer, had always gained through their dealings with Meredith—felt the same way, albeit grudgingly.

Walter Minton, whose nose was going to be tweaked, had disliked Meredith when they first did business and over the years he has had any number of ardent fights with the agent. "I thought him incompetent when I first knew him," Minton told me. "But actually he has turned out to be one of the more responsible agents. You can have a dialogue with him. He tends to expect more from his clients than other agents do, to treat himself as a businessman and the whole industry itself as a business. When an author fails to deliver a manuscript, Scott has been known to return the advance by using his own money."

Roger Straus of Farrar, Straus says, "Some agents are notorious about not paying publishers back, or else dragging their feet till they do. Scott is different. We had this

situation with him recently: there was an advance and then two shoes. The first shoe dropped with 50 per cent of the manuscript, the other with the final portion. We read it at 50 per cent and it was god-awful. We wanted to back out. Meredith convinced us to wait. So we paid up. But when we got to read the end, it was even worse. We wanted our money back. Right afterwards, Scott called and said he'd sold this thing to Stein & Day and that he'd get us back our money. And he did, quickly, graciously and expeditiously."

Peter Schwed at Simon & Schuster, an oldtime defender of Meredith, says, "Sure he pushes and lies. But isn't that what being an agent is all about? Or should be all about?"

All of this is not to say that these men do not see minuses as well as plusses in Meredith. Minton believes that the authors on Meredith's list, despite their numbers, are not—Mailer excepted—a very impressive lot. And he adds, "I wish that for his own good he didn't blow this auction thing so hard. It hurts him in the long run. What's the point of his getting so many huge advances on books that don't earn out?" Roger Straus feels the people Meredith hires are robots with minds that do not work unless activated by the boss. "He has that factory of his. Seems to hire people on a grade-school level. These kind of cats don't just read the fee stuff but everything. And when, for example, I call up and leave my name, they always say, 'What company are you from?'" (There is truth in what Straus tenders. Meredith himself has mentioned to me that he fired one of his assistants not so long ago because a prospective writer dropped by the office unexpectedly one afternoon, gave his name—which wasn't recognized by the assistant—and was simply asked to come by another time. The man was William Colby and his name was on every front page dur-

ing the week he stopped by.) Nevertheless, those who do frequent battle with Meredith are more admiring than antipathetic toward him.

The people with the most revealing views of Meredith often turn out to be the men who once worked for him, those who quit or were fired and went on to make names of their own in publishing. Their numbers are legion. In fact, Henry Morrison says, "There's hardly anyone in New York publishing who's in his forties and been in the

As we talk, it becomes clear why. Meredith taught Curtis to wheel and deal and push, but also to win. "He's a bully. He's a liar," Curtis says. "He has no loyalty. He'll take a writer with a big book away from a publisher who's groomed that writer for years, waiting for the big book. But Scott once said to me, 'People respect you more if you take something away from them than if you give them something.' And he's right. He's a brilliant psychologist." Unlike Mailer, who praised the clarity

ing." He gave up and flew home. Meredith, who says he has "no shame about being an agent," told Curtis when he got to the office, "You're going right back. The guy will be on his feet and as venal as everybody else two days after the operation." Curtis went back, managed to avoid Mrs. Pearson and slip unnoticed into Pearson's hospital room, and to get the contract signed. "That time, and other times too, I felt like a gungel for the mob," says Curtis.

Toward the end of our interview, I had been growing restless. We'd talked for hours and I'd had to send down for extra tapes and the thought of having to play back and make order out of that mass of anecdotes and contract details was making me weary. Like most people I know, I find exuberance and concentration available only in cruelly limited supplies. So I was ready to stop. I turned to Meredith and asked him whether he too wasn't tired. After all, he'd told me he gets up at 5 A.M. and goes to sleep between eleven and two every night. And he said no he wasn't, and that he loved talking about his work.

It was energy, I thought then, that is one of Meredith's essences. At Vegas the gamblers go all night and all day; his rhythms were like theirs. He had been tossing writers and spinning contracts day and night and weekend in and weekend out long before he had started to play dice; that had come later, the afterthought of a too-hardworking man making an intellectual decision to develop recreations. It was also passion that inhabited and thus distinguished him, the classic gambler's passion for euphoria. No, he was not after money so much as exhilaration, the epiphany of beating the others out, the transcendancy of mind against odds.

"I love my work," he told me. "It's Las Vegas every day."

## THE BIG DEAL?

*Kissinger*

"This one was peculiar," Meredith says. There was a rumor earlier this year that Kissinger was going to write his memoirs after he left office and soon afterwards there was a rumor that Meredith would be representing him when he did. "But the first we knew of it," explains Meredith, "was when someone from the AP and someone from the *Times* called to confirm the rumor. We said we knew nothing about it." Shortly afterwards, Meredith had one of his men call one of Kissinger's men, and later the two principals got on the phone and talked. Kissinger hadn't announced that he was Meredith's client, had never spoken before to Meredith. But after the phone call an agreement was reached that if and when Kissinger writes his book Meredith will agent it. "Who was responsible for the rumor?" I asked Meredith. "Can't imagine," he says. "We just don't know."

business for a while who didn't work for Meredith at one point or another." Some of Meredith's ex-employees have become clients and six-figure-advance writers, men like sci-fi authors Theodore Sturgeon and Lester Del Ray, or the many-pseudonymed Evan Hunter (who has just left Meredith's representation after their close to 30 years together); some have become editors, like Joe Elder at Fawcett and Jim Bryans at Bernard Geis; a few have become agents, like Richard Curtis and Henry Morrison and Theron Raines; and one has become one of New York's only new independent publishers, Don Fine of Arbor House. "Meredith is like an obsession for me," says Richard Curtis. "I can't put him out of my mind."

with which Meredith sees the words, Curtis says Meredith is a man with "tunnel vision" but that "nevertheless, what he sees through that narrow vision he sees perfectly."

As I listen to Curtis, I wonder if the two descriptions don't amount to the same thing, for Curtis goes on to extoll the beauty of what he has learned at his old master's elbow. He tells me how he once had to fly down to Washington to get Drew Pearson to sign a \$100,000 contract for a novel that would be ghost-written. The columnist was weak and about to undergo an appendicitis operation; the columnist's wife, who was assuming authority for her sick husband, considered the deal demeaning and was dead set against it. Curtis felt "tacky and undignified about plead-

## ROSEBUD

CONRAD'S  
'FANATIC HEART'He Brings Savage  
Draftsmanship To His Craft

'Nixonstein' made life tense at L.A. Times.

BY PETE HAMILL

With the exception of one major feature, the op-ed page of the *Los Angeles Times* is one of the great tame ponds of American journalism. Its dominant quality is a relentless, studied dullness, expressed in inch after leaden inch of Broderized prose—tentative, cautious, restrained and, by God, *responsible*. No Jack Anderson sullies the muffled tone. No Mary McGroarty welds a reporter's eye to a passionate intelligence. It feels like a page edited in the board room of a bank.

The major exception is Paul Conrad.

Six days a week, Conrad holds forth, slashing away with pen, brush, ink and heart, busting up the bad guys. It is not enough to describe him as an editorial cartoonist; in most American papers, the editorial cartoonist is just another set of fingers in the employ of a publisher. Conrad is a voice. And the voice is his alone: alternately savage, compassionate, brutal and ironic. He is—as Murray Kempton once said of Westbrook Pegler—possessed of a fanatic heart.

His weapons are considerable, including a drawing style that features the boldest blacks and the most savage draftsmanship in any American daily newspaper. Each day he shows up on that op-ed

page he uses his instruments to puncture lies, hokum and corruption.

His extraordinary talents have brought him numerous professional rewards, including two Pulitzer Prizes, two hardcover collections of his work and syndication in about 150 newspapers around the country. They have also brought him work he seems to truly enjoy. Conrad operates out of a small, cluttered office on the second floor of the *Times* building in downtown Los Angeles. The walls are covered with sketches, letters and hate mail, including one Conrad favorite that shows the inside of his head filled with a garbage pail.

"I sure as hell didn't start out to be a cartoonist," he says over lunch. "My father, Bob, worked for a railroad. He was a hell of an artist. But he grew up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Where Grant Wood grew up. And Cedar Rapids, Iowa was only large enough for one artist. That was Grant Wood. If you didn't paint and get a national name, forget it. It was the Depression. So Bob went to work in the railroad, and gave it up. He worked in the freight office, and they'd have rate changes almost daily, printed on these great sheets of cardboard, and he'd bring home stacks of these things. The rate changes were on one side and the other side was blank. So at age five, my twin brother, Jim, and I started drawing trains and all

kinds of other things.

"So we kind of picked up the drawing from Bob. But I would see Ding Darling every day in *The Des Moines Register*. Every day for 18 years. And there was something that happened. First, they were on page one, so I knew they must be important. Second, I realized he is *saying* something. But also I remember one day, when I was still a kid, seeing another cartoon that Ding had done. It was for the American Medical Association, hollering about socialized medicine. And I couldn't figure out how the hell a guy could do a cartoon on page one and *say* something and then do this *paid ad* on the inside. That taught me a hell of a lot, and in those days I really didn't know what it was all about."

After serving in the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II, Conrad attended the University of Iowa on the G.I. Bill.

"I had no idea what to do with myself," he remembers. "Absolutely no idea. And I got to be a junior and still had no idea. Well, Charlie Carroll was the editor of the *Daily Iowan* at the school, and we were friends. Sort of family friends. And one day he said, 'Con, you draw. Why don't you draw a cartoon for tomorrow?' I did. It was a lot of fun, and Charlie and I talked it over. And I did one for the next day. And I've been doing them ever since."

For two years, Conrad did seven cartoons a week at the *Daily Iowan*, "making my mistakes" and assembling a large portfolio. "I had no idea of becoming a cartoonist," he says. "But it just seemed like a *remarkable* way to make a living!" He sent his portfolio to *The Denver Post*, among other papers, and the *Post* asked him to join the staff when he graduated from school. He stayed in Denver for 14 years.

"But I still wasn't conversant in the craft itself," he says of those early years in

Denver. "When I was growing up in Iowa, I just thought that Ding was the beginning and end of editorial cartooning. I hadn't heard of Shoemaker, and Herblock didn't start till, oh, '42, right in there. Nast, the rest of them, Christ I never *heard* of them. In Denver I first started to find out about other cartoonists. And looking at their work, I thought, hell, I guess that's what I'm supposed to do: illustrate the news. I was wrong.

"I don't know where, or when, but thank God not long after, it occurred to me, I'm not making *statements* on the news. I'm not making an editorial *judgment*—which I think is absolutely necessary. So there was a complete transformation of my work. And this is what I try to tell the young guys when they come up here with their work. I tell them, 'Look, you're illustrating the news, you're not *commenting* on it.' So many of the cartoonists today are, I think, *fantastic* artisans. But they are not commenting on the news, they are illustrating it. And doing it beautifully."

A pause.

"I don't think that's enough."

To some extent, Conrad was isolated from the mainstream of American cartooning during his Denver years and as a result developed his unique style.

"Mostly I fought to my own position. Oh, from time to time, some of the other guys would come through Denver, or I'd be in Washington and see Herb (Block) and some of the other guys, but mostly I fought my way along to see what I thought. In fact, I'm a lazy bastard. I'd rather *not* see what other cartoonists are doing on a given issue. I draw the way I react to an issue and many times those reactions are personal. But that's the way I have to work. I just don't want to see what somebody else is doing. I might even convince myself, you know, that it's my idea."

*Pete Hamill is a journalist, novelist and screenwriter.*

Conrad deplores the pack mentality of much American journalism: "It's a rotten shame. I don't know where it's gonna go, to tell the truth. The writing all seems to be about the same. And the cartooning is *much* the same. There are about four, five guys who draw as much like Oliphant as Oliphant does. And that's bad. There *has* to be individuality in the work itself."

It was Conrad's individuality that made him a star cartoonist in the early 60's and brought him to the attention of the *Los Angeles Times*. Conrad did not exactly go panting after the job.

"On my honeymoon in 1953, Kay and I came through California and I saw the L.A. *Times* and I said, 'That's the worst goddamn paper I've ever seen.' I mean, it was a *disgrace*. Then in 1963, Bruce Russell died. He was the *Times* cartoonist for years. He, you know, signed his name on a slant, and drew a lot of bears and eagles, and labeled everything. So when Russell died, I said, well, shit, any paper that put up with Russell for that long, I don't want to work for."

"But I was in Denver that year when they unjustified the type, enlarged the type, and the western edition of *The New York Times* had just folded. And with the unjustified type, there just wasn't any *news*. On a banner story you were lucky to get four paragraphs. All of a sudden I didn't know what was going on. I wasn't actively looking, but I knew goddamn well I had to do something. I had to get with a paper that was printing the news."

"Seventy-seven guys had applied for Russell's job. And then I got a call from Nick Williams, editor of the *Times* and he said, 'Would you come out? We'd like to talk to you.' So I came out, and we had a long talk with [publisher] Otis Chandler, and [associate editor] Jim Bassett, and then they had a little meeting, and Otis said, 'Fine.' They said to

### SON OF NIXONSTEIN



FORGIVE THEM, FATHER. FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO..



**You can't please everyone:** Republicans were horrified by Conrad's portrait of Haldeman, while liberals couldn't understand what the cartoonist called his "liberal position" on abortion.

him, 'You're gonna have trouble with him.' And Otis said, 'That's fine. Let's take him.' So I came out. And it's been the best move I ever made in my life."

Conrad's move was one of the major changes made at the L.A. *Times* as a result of the challenge from *The New York Times*'s western edition, the ascendancy of Otis Chandler to power and the inexorable arrival of the twentieth century in Southern California. The old red-baiting, labor-baiting days were soon left behind.

"Unfortunately," Conrad says, "there are still a lot of readers who think the *Times* has become a whorehouse. People who wish it had remained a Republican house organ—which it was. But you know, I was here about three or four months, and was coming back from Washington, and who gets on the plane but Otis's father Norman Chandler. And he said, 'Who're you sitting with?' And I said, muttering 'Oh Jesus' to myself, 'I think they're all arranged.' And he said, 'But there's only about five people in first class, so let's sit together.' I mumbled okay ... I just couldn't imagine five hours with, you know, *Norman*. It's just ... Well, we had a couple of drinks and finally he said, 'Well, how do you like the *Times*?' And I said, 'Fantastic ... but I gotta tell you. Fifteen years ago I wouldn't have worked on this sheet if I was *desperate*.' And he pointed a finger at me and said: 'You're goddamn right. You *wouldn't* have.' I really loved him for that. And later, I loved him more. He would defend me, in the Los Angeles Club and places like that, defend my right to draw these things the way I saw them."

Despite frequent editorial disagreements (the *Times* supported both Goldwater and Nixon; Conrad opposed them) Conrad says that there is no way he could have continued at the *Times* without

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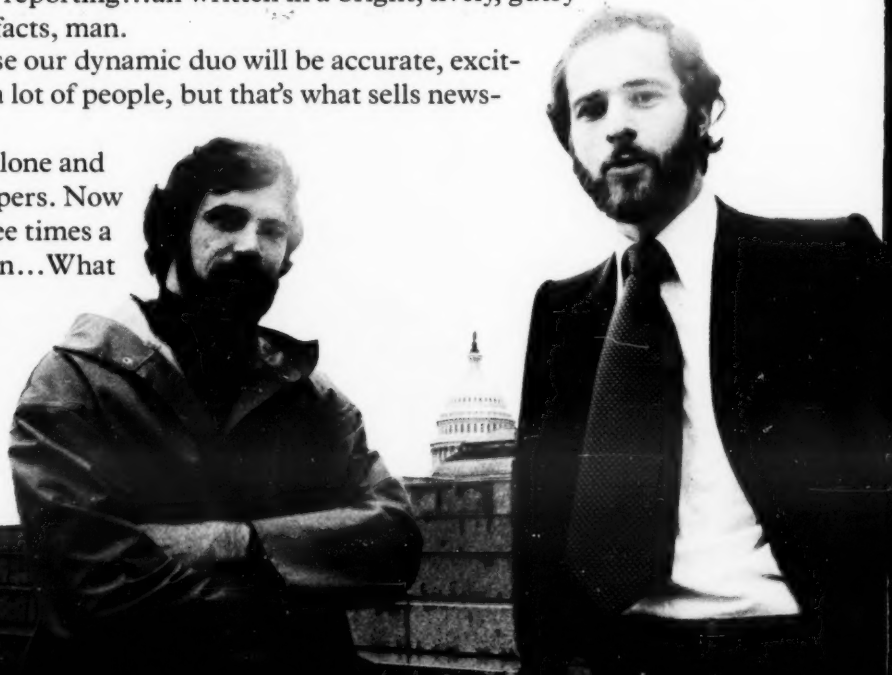
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the support of Otis Chandler. The two men did not come to a truly serious crunch until 1973. Until then, Conrad had been running on the editorial page, with the letters underneath, and the editorials to the left. One morning in 1973 he found himself shifted to the op-ed page, in the upper left-hand corner, and slightly reduced in size.

"The cartoon that really broke the pick was 'Son of Nixonstein,'" he remembers. "I thought it was a magnificent thing, but that's when they decided, 'Yeah, he's going off...' The story, as I get it, is that Otis's sister cut it out and took it over to old Mrs. Chandler's the morning it ran. Saying, you know, 'Something's got to be done.' So they went down to see Otis about it, and Otis said, 'Hell no, no way.' But they did agree that there would be a major policy announcement, that they would no longer support major candidates, and that Conrad would be on the other page. Well, I was very willing to make the move. It makes it easier for me. There's no goddamn confusion now about who speaks for the *Times*."

"But one day, we're all up here having lunch, [national editor] Ed Guthman and the rest of us, and Mrs. Chandler came in. She came over and said, 'Could I interrupt you a minute? I just want to tell you a story.' And she told us this story. She said, 'Yesterday, I'm having some redecorating done and they moved the couch and here's this cartoon under the couch. It was 'Son of Nixonstein.' And I picked it up and looked at it and said to myself, 'Now what was so bad about that?' And we all had a laugh."

Conrad's Nixon cartoons—most of which are included in his collection, *The King and Us*—earned him a place on the Enemies List. But he has just as much fun with local politicians. Ronald Reagan used to call Otis Chandler in bursts of outrage over Conrad's work, and Los



Angeles Police Chief "Crazy Ed" Davis collects prints of Conrad's biting cartoons about him ("I won't give him originals," says Conrad.)

Some doctrinaire liberals, who love Conrad for his anti-Nixon cartoons, cannot understand the vehemence of his anti-abortion cartoons.

"I used to get a lot of protests from them, but now it's less. Mostly they've given up. I'm just of the opinion that my position is the liberal position. I really thought it out, particularly after the Supreme Court decision. They pointed out *before* they made the ruling that they had no idea when life began. That's my angle. I don't know. And neither do many of the authorities. Until I know, I'm stuck with a position that is now unpopular." Should abortion be an election issue? "Absolutely not. And *particularly* not as it was after the Catholic bishops came marching in making it the sole issue. Christ!"

Conrad admires some other cartoonists: "Herblock is a guy who has something to say every day. Bill Mauldin. And the kids who came out of the 60's: Marriott, Tony Auth, Bill Shore, who's now at the *Kansas City Star*, Orson, Bill Peters, McNeely. They're damned good."

What about Oliphant, who with Conrad, Herblock and Mauldin make up the current Big Four of editorial cartooning? Conrad chooses his

words carefully.

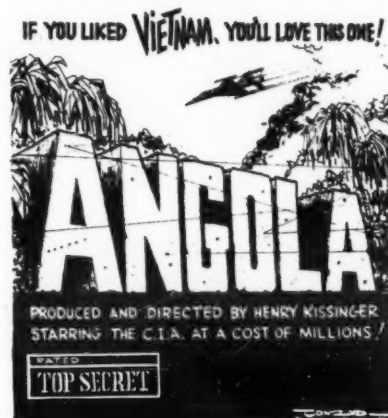
"Oliphant is very good. He's got a biting satirical sense. But I do think—I even hate to say it—but I don't think he has compassion. If he does, I don't see any evidence of it. His treatment of minorities just drives me up the wall. And I don't think now is the time for that kind of portrayal."

Could this have something to do with Oliphant being an Australian?

"I don't know. But the British, to some extent, and the Australians certainly, sure as shit haven't had the racial problems that we have had, and that might be Oliphant's problem. That he hasn't really experienced it. I'm not sure you *have* to experience it, but you have to be aware of it. Particularly here. Today. Here and now, boy, this is where it's at."

What about his own work? Have there been cartoons he wished he hadn't drawn?

"Yeah. I did a couple about Martin Luther King's statement about the Vietnam War. That funds were being drained off that were sorely needed in the U.S. cities. That was about 1967. I'd like to have those back. I was absolutely wrong and he was absolutely right. Immediately after that, I turned around. His was the first statement that really made sense, and I started putting it together and I thought... Ye Gods, what have I done?"



"But on most of them, I have no regrets. Mostly I have regrets on cartoons that just didn't make the *point*. You know? That *miss*. The muse is not there every day. Peaks and valleys, peaks and valleys, and you do your best to level. Anybody who ever worked for a newspaper knows what the hell that's about. You do the absolutely best you can, you run it up to the engraver, and that's the best you can do. You get in the goddamn car, you get in the middle of the Harbor Freeway, where you can't even get off on the son of a bitch, and boy, *there's the whole thing*. The way the cartoon *should* have been done. Now that is sickening."

Paul Conrad leans back and stuffs his hands into the pockets of his trousers, and adds: "That doesn't happen nearly as much as it used to." ■



Conrad: By Conrad

# ESQUIRE'S BIGGIES: CAPOTE, TALESE, WOLFE, W.R. SIMMONS

## W.R. Simmons?

### Right. W.R. Simmons

BY RUST HILLS

"It's the rumors themselves that are killing us," says Geoff Norman, articles editor of *Esquire*. "I called a writer the other day and said, 'Hey, where's the piece?' He said, 'I heard rumors you guys were folding, so I put off doing it.' So I told him, 'C'mon, we're holding a spot for it, get it in. And he is. But who needs all these goddamn rumors?'"

"It's the Simmons report," I tell him. Everyone I've spoken to seems to agree that the fate of the magazine may not exactly stand or fall but will certainly teeter-totter on the outcome of the next Simmons report, due out this autumn, late October, more or less *right now* as you're reading this.

"I don't understand all that about the Simmons report," says Geoff, shaking his head, obviously not interested in the damn thing, and off he goes to a Dubies meeting in Lee Eisenberg's office.

At the Dubious Achievements Awards meeting, it's all new people, but they're still cracking one another up in the same old way. Lee Eisenberg is behind the desk, Harold Hayes's desk from '63 to '73, Don Erickson's desk from '73 to March '76, Lee's since then—the editor's desk. Eisenberg's feet are up on it, which seems to be part of that desk's destiny. A half-dozen editors have dragged in chairs and have their Xeroxes of the "roughs." It's a two-step process: each of the editors brings in rough write-ups of news items and the group decides which are dumb enough; only later, when they're rewritten, do the editors start putting headlines or comments on them. This is a business of trying to top one another for a funny line, and they keep going, giggling and groaning, until they get something Lee thinks will do. Nora Ephron is funny, Gordon Lish is funny, they *all* get funny. The feature is scheduled for January 1977. There was a rumor around a while back that December was going to be *Esquire's* last issue, but no one knew where it came from, and it's pretty much forgotten now. Still, it's not a very comfortable way to work.

Surely everyone who reads *Esquire* has noticed that the magazine over the last few years has been less, say, "exciting" than those scathing, snotty, outrageous, big-read, fascinating issues of the Harold Hayes decade. When those issues were coming out, though, there was always some proportion of management and ad staff who felt that all that almost deliberate bad taste and controversiality were driving advertisers away. But the irony is that it was *after* Harold

Hayes, when they got at least a somewhat more amenable, "service-oriented" editorial product, that their big troubles began. Since—if not because—Hayes left, ad lineage has dropped disastrously, to little more than half the 1,280 pages they had in 1973.

But no one there, so far as I could tell, feels they need to get Harold Hayes back, the way David Smart, the original publisher, finally felt he had to get Arnold Gingrich, the original editor, back in the early 1950's. Some do blame what happened on a lackluster editorial policy, but more speak of circulation problems. Still more are ready to blame the last wretched Simmons report. There's not much they can do about the Simmons report, except wait and worry about the next one, but meanwhile they're re-positioning the magazine in the other two areas.

Over lunch, Lee Eisenberg speaks eloquently of how he's going to make *Esquire* into a magazine that men and women will need, like, even "love"—although I keep telling him not to use that word. Lee is now 30, has been at *Esquire* forever. "As a baby," he says, "I learned how to write those *Esquire* copy blocks that describe a big beautiful automobile and end, 'It's \$42,000. Fuck you. You can't have it.' I could do it in my sleep, right to the exact character count. I want to take that abrasiveness out of the magazine. I want to make it into something people of my generation will need."

But I'll believe it when I see it. People have been trying to get the snottiness out of *Esquire* for years. Snottiness seems to be the magazine's institutional imperative.

Anyway, gentling-down *Esquire* now can't really help much with the next wretched Simmons report. If readers liked the magazine more, it might actually hurt them more, as I'll explain in a minute. Meanwhile, *Esquire's* made some changes in circulation that would help, all things being equal, which they're not.

*Esquire's* problem: with circulation go back to a bad decision made in the mid 1960's. Between '66 and '75 they shot the circulation up from a million to a million-and-a-quarter. This was done as a result of pressures from the advertising sales staff, who felt they couldn't achieve the pages and revenue goals set by the corporate management unless they got that kind of circulation, which would make them competitive with the big magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* and so on. But this was done, as Don Erickson points out, without any regard for the discrepancy between what the magazine actually was, on the one hand, and what was being presented to the advertisers and readers, both, on the other. There may be a

*Rust Hills, former fiction editor of Esquire, is currently writing a book on the short story form.*

million people who want a semi-literary magazine like *Esquire*, but that extra quarter-million just *don't*.

So they've cut circulation now, *back* to a million, and of course it's better for them, just as it's presumably better for *Playboy* now that they've cut down from 6.5 million to five. The *Esquire* renewal rate has stayed the same, or even gone up a bit, despite the fact they've eliminated all those costly, self-destructive subscription deals. Also, that good newsstand circulation is up 15 per cent for the first half of '76. And of course when the quarter-million was cut, they did it so as to improve the demographics. Now they've positioned themselves to be competitive with *New York*, *The New Yorker*, *Psychology Today*, *Harper's* and *Atlantic*, and feel more comfortable about it. But when you start cutting circulation, the rumors start flying that you're in real bad trouble.

"We knew that's what everyone would say, but we felt we just had to do it," says Gil Chapman, president of Esquire, Inc.'s two-magazine publishing group. (The other magazine is *Gentlemen's Quarterly*, which has always seemed to me the dumbest thing going, but is a red-hot book these days due to the American male's New Peacockism—fancy underpants and a lot of things you and I don't understand.) *GQ* has been changed from a part-trade to an all-consumer magazine, and a lot of apparel manufacturers find its \$3,000 to \$4,000 page rate a lot more attractive than *Esquire's* \$9,000 to \$14,000.

The people who made the wrong decisions about circulation have gone, and no one left has to defend them, which makes things more pleasant. David O'Brasky, who left *Esquire* space sales to become publisher of *Gentlemen's Quarterly* and is generally credited with that magazine's success, has now returned to be publisher of *Esquire*. He gets along with Lee Eisenberg, and it's a nice, if rare, thing for the editor and publisher of *Esquire* to get along. Don Erickson, who was the previous editor, is now called editor in chief, but Eisenberg is really the editor. Erickson's role is perhaps awkward—either supervising while not seeming to or else *not* supervising while seeming to—but he feels at least partially responsible for Eisenberg's promotion and admires and likes him and Chapman, and they *all* apparently admire and like the hell out of one another and everything would be jolly, jolly, jolly for a change there—were it not for the everlasting Simmons report.

I imagine more than half the people there don't know what the Simmons report is, or what it did to them. But they all know it's what they have to worry about, and they're right. It makes a nice, mysterious outside menace. The curious thing is that for those there who *do* know what happened, the matter is equally mysterious and even more menacing.

The theory and origins of the Simmons report go way, back to those bleak days in the early 50's when television began to make an impact in advertising and compete with the magazines. The audited ABC cir-





**The Surveyers:** W.R. Simmons (left) founded the magazine audience study; Frank Stanton was president when the controversial 1974-75 report rocked *Esquire*.

culation of the magazines was a known fact, but it could not compete on a cost-per-thousand basis when the networks, through the Nielsen survey and others, began presenting huge numbers—of not just *sets* but *viewers*. The magazines answered with the concept of pass-along readership—not just *copies* of each issue of the magazine, but how many *readers* each copy had. *Life* magazine, in cooperation with Alfred Politz, did a “total audience” survey on *Time*, *Reader's Digest*, some of the women's magazines and other big ones.

In the early 60's, some agency people—BBDO and others—began asking for the same information on *all* magazines. In response to the agency requests, 35 or 40 magazines sponsored a survey done by Willard R. Simmons.

Simmons set up a basic sample of 20,000 households from U.S. Government census sources, and they go to great lengths to get the exact household selected, and not

just the people next door. And you should be glad they don't ask you, because it all takes a long time. They ask you everything: age, occupation, children, income, and about all sorts of products, liquor, cigarettes, cars and so on forever. Magazine readership is surveyed as if it were just another product.

The Simmons interviewer shows you a loose-leaf notebook. On each page of the loose-leaf notebook are five logos of the magazines being surveyed—maybe 10 pages of logos, five to the page, got it? They're in alphabetical order on the page, but the order of the pages is rotated. Now, as I flip through this book, I ask you: “Can you tell me if you ever happened to read any issue of any of these magazines in the last six months?”

Okay, I believe you, but we don't leave it at that. The typical number of magazines-read or magazines-said-read is six. For the magazines you've said you've read only, I pull out a stripped copy from my interviewer's bag of 50 or so stripped copies of the different magazines.

A stripped copy is the cover; *not* the front-of-the-book; *does* include the central editorial sandwich, up to 12 of the lead spreads, but less when there *are* less; and *not*

the back-of-the-book. I take you through it, page by page, and then I ask you: “Have you read this particular issue of *Esquire*?”

If you say yes, then you are considered to be a reader of *Esquire*, no matter how it happened that you saw it. Whether you're a subscriber, bought it on the newsstand, found it in the doctor's office or lying by the side of the road—none of this matters. As it works out, each person who says, “Yes, I saw that issue,” increases the total audience of that magazine, as projected by Simmons, by 10,000 readers.

Obviously, the pass-along readership varies with the kind of magazine. *The National Geographic*, for instance, does badly in total audience studies because subscribers save their copies, keep *decades* of them there on the shelves, all gleaming yellow in the sun. They keep *Reader's Digest*, too. God knows why. But with the weeklies, especially the news-magazines, even *Sports Illustrated*, it's exactly the opposite. People feel they have to get rid of them, there'll be another in next week. Thus the relationship between what's called “primary” readership (by the purchaser or someone in his household)

and “non-primary” is about 50-50 for a magazine like *Esquire*, but it's about 25 per cent primary to 75 per cent pass-along for *SI*, *Time*, *Newsweek* and so on.

Nevertheless, *Esquire* managed a pretty high ratio of readership to circulation, by monthly magazine standards, being pretty much on a par with *The New Yorker's* five, nearly six, readers per copy. From 1965 to 1973, the numbers grew, reflecting the increase in circulation, so that by the eleventh Simmons, in 1973, *Esquire* had seven million readers on a circulation of 1.25 million.

In 1974 there were changes of ownership at Simmons. After some delays, they came



out two years ago, in November, with the “1974-75 Simmons,” and that, as they say at *Esquire*, “was when the shit hit the fan.”

The 1974-75 Simmons used the same basic methods, but based on the 1970 census instead of the 1960 census. It had always been a random sample, the 20,000 households, rather than a stratified, match-up representative sample, and it had chosen different households each year, unlike Nielsen; but now it was based on different “sampling points”: instead of using Suburb A of Pittsburgh, it used Suburb B. The differences are more complicated than they are significant.

But for some reason, the new Simmons came up with very different figures for some few magazines. *Sport* magazine fell somewhat, so did some others, but there was no rhyme or reason to which were affected. Not all monthlies fell. Not all men's magazines. Just a few, just especially *Esquire*. *Esquire's*



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Photos by Diana L. Drake

total audience dropped from seven million readers to four million readers "in one fell swoop." That's what they say at *Esquire*, then they shake their heads sadly and say it again—"in one fell swoop."

*Esquire* people rushed over for some heated discussion with Simmons people about this incredible drop. Frank Stanton, the new director, told them, "It's inexplicable." He said he could not explain the change because all the records of the previous studies had been destroyed and there was no way to check what was different. All he could tell them was that when the logos had been shown, about the same proportion had said they'd read a copy of *Esquire* in the last six months, and that the trouble had come when the particular issue, the stripped copy, had been shown. Discussion grew more heated.

So much so, that when the list of magazines participating in the next Simmons appeared, *Esquire* was not included, and Stanton told them he'd assumed from their attitude that they didn't want to participate. *Esquire* filed suit to get back in, asking for \$1-million in damages for being excluded. Stanton said the new study was already started, and he couldn't put *Esquire* in. *Time*, meanwhile, had sued Simmons on technical grounds, claiming the study hadn't been up to the standards it had paid for and had been improperly conducted. Then in the spring of 1975, Stanton said he would not put out the study *Esquire* had been excluded from, so the suit to get into the study that hadn't been done was dropped. Stanton announced a new study, the one that



**The Editors:** Harold Hayes (left) was squeezed out at the end of the Golden Age. Can Lee Eisenberg restore the glitter?

should be out about now.

Of the drop in *Esquire's* readership from seven million to four million, just common sense would have to say that either Simmons was wrong before, or they're wrong now. It's just not conceivable that a magazine's readership would drop from seven million to four million in one year on virtually the same circulation—the quarter-million circulation take-off having been done much more recently. You'd think everybody could just discount it as a mistake, but they can't, because of the uses the Simmons report is put to.

The report is published in 30 volumes, two or three mimeographed pages to each volume, each page a complex and detailed table of figures. You can look up any sort of tiny specific figure you want on these charts, like what percentage and/or actual projected number of adult male (over 18) *Esquire* readers drank any Scotch whisky in the previous month. But more importantly, far more importantly, you can use these figures the other way: by feeding them to the computer.

That's what Simmons was developed for: the concept of media selection by computer. Once you put all that Simmons comparable data into

the computers you can ask it questions far too subtle and sophisticated for mortal men, or even you and me. If you've got an amount of money to advertise Scotch whiskey and it's not just a matter of cost-per-thousand, but also "reach" and "frequency," subtracting "overlap" or maybe not subtracting overlap, plus all the demographic considerations and jargon, jargon, the computer speaks your language and tells you in five seconds which magazines to buy—one, two, three, say, in terms of "efficiency" above the cut-off point in the client's budget.

But no matter how complicated it all is, sooner or later you have to mix in the cost-per-thousand. It's easy to see how the figures are skewed by a difference of three million total readership on the same buy. You take the page rate, and if you divide it by four million readers instead of seven million readers, the answer is going to come out disastrous for *Esquire*, no matter what the question.

And it *has* been a disaster. In the first six months of this year, they took a real beating. They deny the rumor that they're losing \$5 million a year, but they don't deny the report in *Media Industry Newsletter* that the magazine

dropped \$2 million in the last fiscal year. They feel they've "bottomed out" now: *Esquire* was up in ad pages in August and September, and will be up in December, and the December issue will run over a hundred ad pages, for the first time they've broken a hundred in 14 months, and the first quarter of '77 looks good, and things are looking better, especially in Detroit, where it counts, they say, and so on. But of course you've got to bottom out with some real bounce-back from a \$2 million loss.

Meanwhile, the rumors have been killing them. The only one that seems to be true is that Gulf & Western made a run on the stock. The rumor that Fairchild was trying to buy *Esquire* was apparently pure rumor. There seem to be small grounds, or none, for rumors that either Harold Hayes or Clay Felker was trying to take over the magazine. Maybe I got conned into thinking all the rumors about *Esquire* folding soon were wrong, but if so, I was glad to be conned that way.

A lot does seem to depend on the imminent Simmons, but not perhaps everything. David O'Brasky somewhat discounts its importance. "A lot of people didn't want to be in *Esquire*," he says, "and I



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think they may have just used the Simmons figures as an excuse for staying out." To some extent this may just reflect how much he admires and likes the new Eisenberg *Esquire*, and how sure he is he can sell it. Yet when I asked Chapman why *Esquire* had not just paid but sued to get back into a syndicated research program that had mauled them so badly, he replied: "You have to be in the computer." Simmons is the only

game in town, and if you're not in it, you're not playing. It isn't that the actual life or death of *Esquire* hangs on the next report—or at least they don't acknowledge thinking that way there now. It's just that if the next Simmons is as bad as the last one was, more "adjustments" will have to be made.

With Marvin Krauss, who is *Esquire*'s expert on research and has dealt most directly with the Simmons problems, I

got to musing about what possible directions these "adjustments" to the editorial approach would have to take in order to please the computer. It seemed to me that any good magazine, one that a subscriber would want to read carefully and possibly want to save because it was so interesting or attractive, would be at a great disadvantage. To get a higher readers-per-copy number, you'd have to make the magazine worse.

"You know, Rust," Marvin Krauss interrupts me. "The sad thing, the terrifying thing to me about all this, is that if you were deliberately to



Esq. Inc.

design a magazine to accommodate to this pass-along-reading concept, what you'd come up with is a magazine exactly like *People*."

## THE GOODWIN STORY

### Gentleman's Agreement At *Esquire*: Dubious Achievement

The deal was sealed with champagne.

The November issue of *Esquire* contains a column by Don Erickson, the editor in chief of the magazine. In the column, Erickson quotes Arnold Gingrich, the late founding editor, on the subject of Richard Goodwin. Goodwin, according to Gingrich, is a fine fellow—nothing like the unpleasant character Gingrich had read about in the November 1975 *Esquire*.

Nora Ephron, senior editor of *Esquire*, who edited the piece on Goodwin, devoted her regular media column for the October 1976 *Esquire* to the story behind the story of Gingrich's kind words about Goodwin. A.L. Blinder, president of *Esquire*, Inc., killed Ephron's column.

#### BY NORA EPHRON

In November 1975, *Esquire* magazine published an article by a young writer named Bo Burlingham. It was called "The Other Tricky Dick," and it was a long reporting piece, 10,000 words or so, on Richard Goodwin, author, speechwriter to Presidents, and then-fiancé of Lyn-

don Johnson's biographer Doris Kearns. I was the editor on the piece. Burlingham portrayed Goodwin as an ambitious, crafty manipulator, a brilliant man who loved to outsmart his friends and associates to further his career. The article was carefully reported, the facts in it checked by the magazine's research department, and *Esquire*'s lawyer and managing editor grilled Burlingham on his sources for the article. All of us on the editorial side of the magazine believe that Burlingham's article was solid. Which does not explain how it came to pass that a few weeks ago, *Esquire* Inc. decided to pay Goodwin \$12,500 and to print the apologetic column about the article which appears in this issue.

Magazines settle libel suits out of court all the time, of course. Not all magazines—*The New Yorker* has a strict policy against it; but many other magazines believe that it is cheaper to settle than to pay the high costs of litigation. At *Playboy*, I'm told, they say that the magazine has never lost a libel case; the reason is

that the magazine settles before it gets to court. All of this is a fairly well-kept secret in the magazine business; in fact, one of the arguments put to me against my writing this column was that if it becomes known that *Esquire* settles out of court, every joker whose name is mentioned in the magazine might end up suing. I rather doubt that will happen—but in any case, my concern is not with future nuisance suits, merely with this one.

The trouble with Goodwin began in August 1975, before Burlingham's article even appeared in the magazine. Doris Kearns, who is now Goodwin's wife, came to New York to see me and Don Erickson, editor of *Esquire*. She asked us to kill the article. She said that Goodwin had become so nervous about what it might contain that he had taken to his bed on Cape Cod and had been there for two weeks. At that point, the article was on the presses and could not have been killed if Richard Goodwin dropped dead. We told her this. Then, a few days before publication, a telegram arrived—I can't remember whether it was from Goodwin or from a friend of Goodwin—putting the magazine on some sort of legal notice. A rumor came floating through that Goodwin had hired President Nixon's former lawyer James St. Clair and was planning to sue *Esquire* for libel. Then nothing for a while.

In the early months of 1976—I'm sorry to be so

fuzzy about dates, but I didn't know what was going on—a man named Arnold Hyatt telephoned the president of *Esquire*, Inc., A.L. Blinder. Hyatt, a Boston shoe manufacturer and contributor to Democratic campaigns, knew both Blinder and Goodwin, and he apparently suggested the two men get together and work this thing out like gentlemen. A couple of points about Abe Blinder. The first is that a few years ago, he and the rest of the magazine's management were slightly traumatized by the result of a lawsuit William F. Buckley filed against *Esquire* over an article by Gore Vidal. *Esquire*'s lawyers wanted to fight the suit: they were certain it would be dismissed in a summary judgment. But it wasn't, and the ultimate cost to the company, including the eventual out-of-court settlement, was in the neighborhood of \$350,000. A second point is that Blinder takes pride in the fact that he rarely interferes in the magazine's editorial matters. When I interviewed him about the Goodwin matter, he told me that he probably would not allow this column to be printed in the magazine—but he added that he had vetoed only one other article in his 33-year history at *Esquire*. "It was about Morris Lapidus, the architect of the Fontainebleau Hotel," he said, "and it was very negative, very uncomplimentary. The Tisch brothers are good friends of mine, and they called and

told me it would be bad for the hotel business if we printed it."

After Hyatt's call, Blinder spoke to Goodwin and arranged a lunch for himself. Goodwin, Kearns and Arnold Gingrich, the editor in chief and founder of *Esquire*. Goodwin arrived at the lunch with a set of papers containing a legal complaint and an itemization of grievances against the article. Blinder told Goodwin he had three alternatives: he could write a letter to the editor, he could sue or he could forget it. Goodwin said that a letter to the editor would simply be his word against Burlingham's. But he indicated that he would be willing to work something out short of a lawsuit. At this point, Arnold Gingrich made a suggestion. He wrote a monthly column in which he often commented on articles in the magazine, and he might be able to write something that would reflect Goodwin's version of events. A token payment of \$1,000 was mentioned, and everyone went home. A few weeks later, Goodwin met with Gingrich to draft the column. The next day, Gingrich was hospitalized with lung cancer; he died in July.

While Gingrich was in the hospital, the column that appears in this issue was written by Don Erickson, now editor in chief of the magazine. In it, Gingrich relates that after reading Burlingham's article, which portrayed Goodwin as a Sammy Glick, he was surprised to meet Goodwin and find no trace at all of the ruthlessness Burlingham alluded to. Burlingham's portrait, said Gingrich, "is sufficiently at odds with the man himself that an appraisal is in order..."

As it continues, the column is extremely clever. It is framed as one man's opinion, not as a formal apology, so there was no need for the magazine to show it to the author or editor involved. It is full of "he said" and "he told me," so that nothing is actually

denied; still, the impression is that there was somehow faulty, incomplete or inaccurate reporting. Gingrich claims to be speaking as an editor in disagreement with the other editors of the magazine, but this is not really accurate: Gingrich was not just the founder of the magazine but its guiding spirit, and a reappraisal from him is considerably more loaded than a simple difference of opinion among equals.

But there's more to the

Burlingham's article: Diana instead offered \$5,000. Arnold Hyatt, the shoe man, then resurfaced. He called Blinder to say that Goodwin was shocked at the belligerent tone of Diana's letter: Goodwin, all injured innocence, could not understand how things had gotten so unpleasant. Blinder was apparently persuaded by the call, and the \$12,500 fee was arrived at. Blinder then sent Hyatt a case of champagne.

Out-of-court settlements



Goodwin: Did he deserve an apology?

Joan Bingham

story. Erickson's draft was sent to Goodwin for approval. Then, in June, *Esquire* received a letter from James St. Clair, who turned out to be Goodwin's lawyer after all, demanding \$16,000 for Goodwin to pay the legal fees entailed in reaching the settlement. This came as a surprise to the management. Blinder was under the impression that the token payment of \$1,000 was agreed upon; he also believed that this was to have been a transaction among gentlemen, not lawyers. *Esquire's* house counsel, Ron Diana, replied to St. Clair on July 7. He said the magazine was completely unwilling to pay such a high fee, particularly because it continued to believe in the accuracy of

are extremely complicated, or so I have found from talking to lawyers in the past couple of weeks. They're reached as a result of a combination of practical and ethical considerations. Generally speaking, though, if a magazine is willing to settle, the rule is this: if the magazine believes its article was right, it may settle for practical considerations and pay a token amount to avoid court costs. If the magazine is wrong, it may settle not only by paying off but also by printing a retraction, correction or apology. What is extremely rare—so rare that none of the lawyers I interviewed could recall a similar case—is for a magazine that believes it is right to pay off and print a retraction of sorts.

I can't quarrel with the financial settlement Goodwin got. I don't like it, but it's a business decision, I suppose. But Goodwin got the money and the apology. This is a tribute to him: he is as crafty and manipulative and brilliant as Bo Burlingham said he was. But it's a bad moment for this magazine. Abe Blinder told me that he had no problem with the settlement because, "There is no principle involved." I would like to state the principle involved. It's very simple. A magazine has an obligation to its writers and readers to stand by what it prints.

In any case, the Goodwin business is over. Bo Burlingham got \$1,250 for his article and Dick Goodwin got \$12,500 and an apology. There are all sorts of lessons to be drawn here, but the only one that seems to me at all worth mentioning is that I will henceforth try, when assigning articles on controversial subjects, to find writers who know the Tisch brothers.

In our conversation, Abe Blinder said that another reason he would probably not allow this column to run in *Esquire* was that Arnold Gingrich is dead and cannot defend himself. I am deeply sorry that Arnold is dead, for many reasons. For one thing, he was a man who could change his mind, and I like to think that by now he might have come around to Burlingham's way of seeing Dick Goodwin. For another, I think he meant it when he said what he did at the end of his monologue on Goodwin: "I've always said that this is a magazine of infinite surprises where people can say what they damn please, even to the extent of the editors' disagreeing among themselves." If he were alive, I think that on those grounds he would have allowed me to print this column in the magazine; he would also have admitted that I outfoxed him just a little bit on that one small point.

One last thing. I speak only for myself, but I would like to apologize to Bo Burlingham. ■

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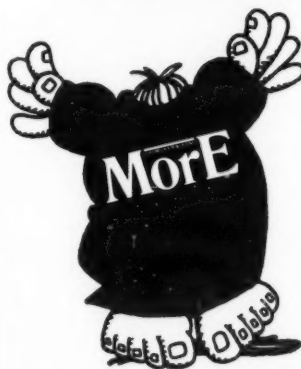
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## SPORTS

## OH SAY, CAN YOU STAND IT?

## Choosing The Right Anthem Singer Is Tricky Business

Fans growing touchy about the tune.

BY RANDALL POE

*"The Star Spangled Banner"?*

"It's what they sing at every basketball or hockey game," a first-grader told *The New York Times*, providing the perfect modern definition of our national anthem.

Through the seasons, I have come to endure the sports anthem as harmless artifice. But it makes some people very uneasy. A friend of mine, yet to discover the connection between the anthem and the Redskins' kickoff, times his arrival at RFK Stadium so that he misses the ceremony. One man, one vote, upholding the separation of sports and state.

"The Star Spangled Banner" was reportedly first performed at a sporting event—the 1914 Wannamaker Melrose Games in New York—to inspire milers to a new world record. It was played at a baseball game as far back as 1917, although it didn't become ritual until World War II.

There are two major jock versions of "The Star Spangled Banner." One is the Gentle Anthem (heard at baseball, basketball, swimming and track), which is robotically endured if not sung. The Anthem-as-Muzak. The other is the Peasant Anthem

*Randall Poe is a freelance writer who has been anthemed at least 1,200 times.*



Merrill: The all-time, all-star "Oh-Say-Can-You-See Guy."

(football, hockey, soccer, boxing, wrestling), a participatory sporting event in itself since the flow of the music is shattered by fans lusty for combat. The Anthem-as-War-Dance.

At New York Ranger hockey games, for instance, there is open competition to determine which unit of fans can obliterate the song first. Two years ago, the roaring began at "gave proof through the night." It has now moved up to "o'er the ramparts we watched." As Mike Burke, president of Madison Square Garden, warned Metropolitan Opera singer Robert Merrill last season: "Don't ask them to sing along with you. I know these people. They are rough customers."

Fearing anthem overkill, a growing number of teams are infiltrating new "anthems" into sport. The Rangers have begun using Merrill's "America The Beautiful".

No sport rides closer herd on the anthem than major league baseball. The vast platoon of singers seeking baseball gigs are carefully screened to assure a "dignified" rendition. Baseball is still bedeviled by the José Feliciano story. Feliciano's earthy Latin anthem sung at the 1968 World Series was attacked not so much on musical grounds as political ones. "Filthy," "un-American" and "tasteless" said the telegrams reaching the commissioner's office. Monte Irvin, the former Giants baseball star and now high baseball official, says: "We are seriously considering an official anthem for baseball. It would be taped so that singers could fake it. It's a very difficult song to sing, but it just has to be sung dignified. You can't have people jazzing it, or doing it country western, or doing it the tasteless way Feliciano did."

At least one major league team dared to tempt the anthem gods. In 1972, the Kansas City Royals took their fans off a daily anthem diet, announcing that the song would be played only on opening day and special occasions. This radical experiment lasted less than two weeks. Veterans groups hit the Royals like an army of occupation.

The Mets check to see that the song is not bastardized. "We let all singers know just how we want it done. We want it straight with no frills. The anthem is an important part of the game. When our television coverage begins late and doesn't include the anthem, the fans at home start yelling."

The undisputed Uncle Sam of the anthem is Robert Merrill, who has sung it more times and at more sporting events than any living man. His recorded version is now

played in more than a dozen stadiums. Merrill's jock acceptance is due not only to his vocal prowess and rocket-bursting excesses, but his longevity in the anthem business. The fact that he is an authentic sports fan also helps.

"I sing it stirringly," he says. "I can hit the high notes without straining. Most popular voices have very small ranges. You've got to sing it stirringly so that people feel something in common. Fans are impatient at games. Ninety per cent can't sing with you. They don't know the words. So you have to grab them."

"The song lasts only a minute and a half, but they want the damn game, the first pitch, the first basket. I must do it okay. Young fans don't even know me as an opera singer but they want me to autograph their baseballs. They call me the 'Oh Say Can You See' Guy."

Merrill says he has blown the words only once—at John Kennedy's Madison Square Garden birthday party. "I started shaking, I don't know why. I practiced at home several times and kept repeating the words. But when I came to 'the rockets' red glare' I forgot everything. I saw the President looking at me with great doubt. Marilyn Monroe looked over at him with that same concern. Since that time I have written the words on a baseball scorecard which I carry with me, just in case. Singing that song is a very mental thing."

Which is perhaps the reason a young trumpeter told Walter Cronkite during CBS's Bicentennial coverage that his dream is to play the anthem at Shea Stadium and Jimi Hendrix wanted to work a World Series. And why else would a choir consisting, in part, of singers who vocalize through artificial voice boxes lobby for the chance to sing "The Star Spangled Banner" at this season's Super Bowl game?

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And that one magazine attracts leading advertisers to share its unique rapport with 1,310,000 of the most desirable consumers in our society—men and women who are not afraid to be first and not about to settle for second best.

*New York Magazine*. Circulation: 375,000. When you think New York, you think *New York*.



Now, here's California, a new power center, suddenly the number-one state in population. Out of California reeled a golden-haired, sun-bronzed, CinemaScope, freeway, quake-cool life-style, solidly based on agribusiness, oil, aerospace, entertainment, and leisure. California became our national guru, exporting intense concern over pollution of the landscape and the mindscape. It's the almanac of our future.

That's exactly why California needed *New West Magazine*. To report on today's life-style for today's Californians. Barely six months old, *New West* is a stunning success. Its distinctive California brand of brilliant, brash, biting journalism connected. Circulation jumped from 125,000 to 240,000. After a dozen issues, *New West* chalked up 630 pages of advertising.

Where's the power? California? New York? Can you compare the Big Apple with the Big Orange? Can you succeed in marketing using one but not the other? No need to decide. As a major advertiser you need both. Buy them separately or buy them together with special discounts. You'll reach 2,000,000 of America's most venturesome consumers. That's power.

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